

15¢ *color*

STREET & SMITH'S

CONTENTS COPYRIGHTED 1935

LOVE STORY ★

EVERY WEEK

MAGAZINE

NOV. 9, 1935

FOOTBALL WIFE

By Ruby la Verne Thomson



ILLUSTRATED

Bright's WINES

DELICIOUS!

APPETIZING!

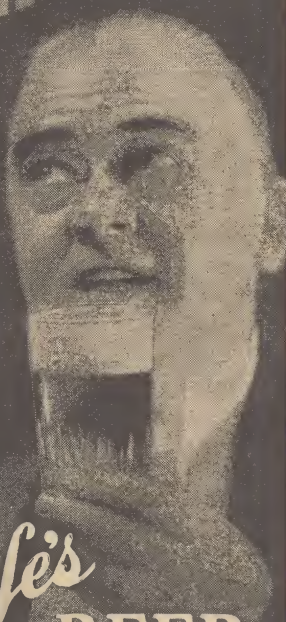
NOURISHING!



T. G. BRIGHT & CO. LIMITED - NIAGARA FALLS - ONT.

CANADA'S LARGEST WINERY — ESTABLISHED 1874

Ah-h-h!



O'Keefe's
OLD VIENNA BEER

O'KEEFE'S ESTABLISHED 1846



STREET & SMITH'S LOVE STORY

MAGAZINE

Title Registered U. S. Patent Office

The entire contents of this magazine are protected by copyright, and must not be reprinted without the publishers' permission.



Yearly Subscription, \$6.00 Six Months, \$3.00 Single Copies, 15 Cents

CONTENTS FOR NOVEMBER 9, 1935

CONTINUED NOVELS

Half A Wife	Audrey D. Mountain	52
In Four Parts—Part Three		
House Party Girl	Philip Fair	105
In Five Parts—Part Two		

COMPLETE STORIES

Football Wife	Ruby la Verte Thomson	10
"Angel, I Said—"	Jeannette Helm	25
The Jane High Cocktail	Jesse F. Gelders	39
Leading Lady	B. Virginia Lee	75
Wedding Ring	Pauline Brooks	83
A Bad Penny	Mary Irwin	96
Moonlight Madness	Ives Tudor	124

POETRY

A Picture	Margaret Ormandy	38
Constancy	Helen Maring	51
Radio Ruse	Brock Milton	104
After The Hike	Bert Cooksley	137

DEPARTMENTS

Your Stars And You	Kai	138
The Friendliest Corner	Mary Morris	143
The Friend In Need	Laura Alston Brown	151

Beginning soon—"Savannah Sue," by Vivian Grey. Watch for it!

Publication printed and published every week by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., at Gardenvale, Quebec, George C. Smith, Jr., President; Ormond V. Gould, Vice-President and Treasurer; Artemas Holmes, Vice-President and Secretary. Copyright, 1935, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., New York. Copyright, 1935, by Street & Smith Publications, Inc., Great Britain. Application made for entry as second class mail matter at Ottawa, Canada.

We do not accept responsibility for the return of unsolicited manuscripts.

To facilitate handling, the author should enclose a self-addressed envelope with the requisite postage attached.

STREET & SMITH PUBLICATIONS, INC.

GARDENVALE, QUE.



He's A
MAN'S MAN

AND HE'S STRONG FOR

melchers

GOLD CROSS
GENEVA



IMPORTANT

Melchers Geneva is a straight-distilled Gin, is made directly from fine grains, and rectified four times for strength and purity, a Gin of no regrets.

Ask any active, outdoor man why he likes Melchers Gold Cross Geneva. He'll tell you!

"Because it's a good, honest masculine drink. Because it's meant to be taken straight, or with a dash of plain water . . . the way a man likes his drink."

This is important, too. It's PURE, a straight distilled gin . . . not a blend. No worry about tomorrow, if you stick to Melchers Geneva.

10 ounces \$1.00 26 ounces \$2.30
40 ounces \$3.30

"A MAN'S DRINK"

675

Distilled and bottled in Canada by
Melchers Distilleries Limited, Montreal and Berthierville.



Movie action

MAGAZINE

THE LATEST GRIPPING
MOVIES
IN SMASHING, FULL-LENGTH
STORIES

THE BIGGEST
10¢
ON THE NEWS STANDS
TODAY

35c

at your dealer
or by mail

Start an

35c

at your dealer
or by mail

IDEAL LIBRARY

Fiction's Two Most Colorful Characters—*The Shadow* and *Doc Savage*. Their exciting, engrossing experiences now available under six titles:

1. The Living Shadow
2. The Man of Bronze
3. The Eyes of the Shadow
4. The Land of Terror
5. The Shadow Laughs
6. Quest of the Spider

Two Hundred and Fifty pages set in easily read type . . . attractive binding . . . vivid, virile, vigorous tales of astonishing adventurers. . . . Matchless Value. . . .

Smashing Entertainment!

At Your Book Store or News Stand

If your dealer cannot supply you, purchases can be made direct from Street & Smith Publications, Inc., 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.



STREET & SMITH PUBLICATIONS, INC.

GARDENVALE, QUEBEC

*The following publications
are printed in Canada on
Canadian paper:*

LOVE STORY
MAGAZINE

WESTERN STORY
MAGAZINE

DETECTIVE STORY
MAGAZINE

COMPLETE STORIES

SPORT STORY
MAGAZINE

ROMANCE RANGE

BILL BARNES AIR
TRAILS

THE SHADOW
MAGAZINE

TOP-NOTCH

STOP GETTING UP NIGHTS

If you get up frequently at night on account of irritation and weakness of the bladder, write me for a sample of my Home Treatment for the relief of this condition. This medicine made me a well man after everything else failed to help me. I send it free so you can try it and know how quickly it relieves the irritation and stops the getting up nights. Write today. Send no money. F. L. McWehby, 345 Sandwich St., West., Dept 259-A Windsor, Ontario.

NICK-CARTER
MAGAZINE

DOC SAVAGE
MAGAZINE

COWBOY STORIES

CLUES DETECTIVE

STREET & SMITH
WILD WEST STORIES

BEST DETECTIVE
MAGAZINE

MOVIE ACTION
MAGAZINE

WESTERN WINNERS

PETE RICE WESTERN
ADVENTURES

DYNAMIC
ADVENTURES



BECOME A SUCCESSFUL DETECTIVE...

Trained Men and Women in Demand everywhere in Canada, for secret investigation, and confidential Detective work. Experience unnecessary. Big pay Rewards. Complete course by mail. Cost amazingly low. If you are 18 years or over. Write for free information to.

MAURICE JULIEN

B. 25, Postal Station J. Montreal

PILES DON'T SUFFER Needlessly, Try This Treatment FREE

No matter what your age or occupation, if you have piles in any form write for a FREE sample of Page's Combination Pile Treatment and you will bless the day that you read this. Write today. E. R. Page Co., 3 Charles St., West, Dept. 10-A4 Toronto, Ont.



Can Spring Be Far?

By H. CARL ANDERSEN

I WONDER if when autumn comes again,
 Will you be here, when I may need you most;
 Or will the autumn turn to winter sere
 With nothing but the memory of your ghost?

I wonder if the years that now have gone,
 Will be relived with you e'er by my side;
 Or will the years run on in loneliness,
 With nothing in my heart but what has died.

I wonder; as I often think of you,
 When winter comes, can spring be far away,
 Can spring be far, will summer bring you sweet
 Again to me—forever and a day?



Football Wife

By Ruby la Verte Thomson

SHERRY bent her amber-gold head over the desk, as if wholly absorbed in work. Vaguely, she was aware of the glances cast her way; of the men, who never failed to come hastening at her alluring smile, and the girls who glared their jealous hatred at her—as girls always did, wherever Sherry worked.

Sherry's thoughts were in the inner office, beyond the door marked:

J. D. ELCOTT, PRIVATE

A few minutes before, she had seen young Craig Elcott stride into that office. He hadn't even known Sherry was there, but she had been keenly conscious of him. There had been something in the fling of his dark head, in the set of his broad shoulders, that thrilled her, strangely. And now, hearing angry voices that droned like distant thunder in the outer office, she knew a queer eagerness to have Craig come back from the stormy session with his father.



When the door started to open, she didn't look up, as the other girls did. She just sat there, knowing that her hair, under the slanting afternoon sun, was a golden glory; that her lashes were long and dark and softly curled. In another moment, she would lift those lashes, and give Craig a full view of violet eyes. And when she did——

Footsteps paused beside her. She looked up, slowly.

"Well," he rasped, "have you lost your hearing? Dad's calling—and he's signing your pay checks, remember!"

And not until then did Sherry hear the buzzer!

Craig stalked on out, without a glance at her, and Sherry was left to face the contemptuous laughter that rippled over the room.

Throwing back her head, she hur-

ried into the private office where old J. D. was stalking back and forth like a caged lion.

He stopped, stared at her from under bushy gray brows. "You're not much afraid of losin' your job, are you?"

Sherry paled a little, but kept her chin high. "I've lost other jobs," she told him, coolly.

"You're gunpowder, tossed in a furnace, when you're in a bunch of men," he grunted. Then, abruptly: "I can't afford to keep a firebrand around. I'm givin' you two weeks' wages in place of the usual notice, and you can leave to-day. That's fair!"

Anger surged through Sherry. She faced him, her hair a soft halo

around her lovely face, her eyes pools of violet fury.

"Fair?" she echoed. "What do you know about fairness? I've given you the service you asked for! I've earned my wages, honestly. And now, because a lot of fool men cast their eyes my way——" She stopped, choking. Then as she remembered one pair of scornful eyes that had not been turned her way, she went on, more furiously than before, "Because your idiotic *Tarzan* of a son can't behave, because you can't trust him, you turn me off!"

J. D. watched her, curiously. "You're alone in the world, aren't you? Your dad died last year, broke. You'd had two years at Mount Darnell; but you quit, took a business course, and went to work."

"Yes," she replied. "I took a job, and got fired, because a man's wife couldn't trust him. I took another, and a jealous old-maid stenographer lied about me. I've had seven jobs in six months. I've done good work in all of them, but I've been fired seven times. And now"—her eyes hardened, and tight lines came around her sweet mouth—"now, I'm out to get even. Before any man has a chance to hurt me, I'm going to hurt him—plenty."

"Very good!" J. D. applauded. "You're hired!" And then as she stood there, staring at him, wondering, he went on with a chuckle, "I've fired you from this job to hire you for another. It starts now. Sit down while I talk."

Sherry sank to a chair, wide-eyed with bewilderment.

"You're going to Lucerne University," J. D. went on. "It's already opened, this week, but you can enter Monday."

"Lucerne! That's where your son goes! Where you went——" Her

eyes went to a framed picture on the wall; the football team of '04.

J. D. nodded, proudly. "I played half; made a good record, but my son can beat it. He can make all-American, if he tries. But he wants to turn in his suit—for a red-headed, green-eyed night-club dancer."

"Mimi Durant," Sherry murmured. "They've talked about your son's crush out there!" She nodded toward the outer office. "What do you want me to do?"

"Vamp my son. Take him away from Mimi. For once, use your lure for some definite good. Get yourself a wardrobe at my expense," he went on. "Enter Lucerne, and make Craig forget Mimi—the way you make the men in my office forget to work! But most of all, make him play football! She doesn't want him to play, but he's got to! My son can't make a fool of himself over a gold digger!"

"And if I do this——"

"There'll be ten thousand dollars in it for you if he breaks his engagement with Mimi Durant and plays football; five more if he makes all-American!"

Sherry looked up, curiously. "Is football then so important? More important than your son's happiness?"

J. D. took a moment to straighten the papers on his desk. Then he answered. "I want both football and happiness for Craig. But there was Chester Canning, and his son——" He stopped. Then: "I won't be tricked like that! Do you want the job?"

For another minute, Sherry thought of Craig Elcott, who had made her ridiculous before the others. He had something coming to him. Something that would hurt him.

She stood up. "I'll take the job."
"I'll phone Craig," J. D. told her.
"Tell him you're the daughter of an old friend. He'll meet you, and introduce you. So now, it's up to you, my dear! And good luck!"

Sherry wished herself good luck when the train pulled into Lucerne, and she saw Craig Elcott's tall, handsome figure standing on the platform. For a moment, she knew fleeting fear. Perhaps she couldn't put it over!

"You're Sherry Dale," he said, as he came toward her. "And I'm the lucky guy who's to see you safely launched here!" He held her hand a moment, his eyes searching her face. "If dad had somebody like you up his sleeve," he finished gallantly, "why did he wait till now to trot you out?"

She sent him a devastating smile. "You mean I'm too late?"

He nodded, but his dark eyes were warmly admiring. "I'm practically in ball and chain, this minute. But that doesn't mean we can't have a good time. I'm taking you to the school dance to-night."

"And the ball and chain?"

"Oh, she'll understand," he said, loftily. "She's busy to-night. She's a dancer."

"I see," Sherry murmured, but her eyes were thoughtful.

Sherry chose a white dress that evening; one with a quaint round bertha, and a skirt that clung closely over slim hips, to flare out in foamy flounces below the knees. She brushed her golden hair back from her forehead, bound it with a silver ribbon, and let soft waves have their own sweet way.

Craig's manner became promptly possessive. He kept her away from the stag line as much as possible

when they danced, and cut in again when he lost her. And when the other men cut back again too frequently, Craig led her outside, to his coupé.

"We'll sit out a few, and get acquainted," he said.

There was a sweet intimacy there in the smart car, with the rest of the world shut away; with the moonlight glowing goldenly, and the soft music floating down from College Hall. Again Sherry knew fear at the rapid beating of her pulses, and the warm emotion that surged over her, at his nearness.

"I'm glad you came," Craig told her, softly, "and I'm glad I'm not in training. We couldn't have half as much fun."

She looked up, her eyes wide with feigned surprise. "You mean, you're not playing football? Oh, Craig, you can't mean that! Why, I've been so thrilled over coming here to your college, having a chance to see you play, and be your friend." She stopped, then added softly. "Don't you like football any more?"

"Sure I do!" His voice was husky with regret. "Only—well, there are reasons."

"The girl friend?" Sherry persisted.

"Yes. Mimi doesn't like the game; she's high-strung, nervous. She gets positively ill with worry. Besides, if I play, I have to keep in training and that means I won't get a chance to see her at all. She dances till late. And—well, she's given me my choice: football or her. And I've chosen Mimi."

"You must love her, terribly"—Sherry snuggled closer, and her eyes were very wide and awed—"if you're willing to sacrifice so much for her. Because it is a sacrifice to a man like you. Football is a man's game."

Craig sighed. "It's good to have some one who understands, Sherry. It's been terrible, trying to decide. And then dad——"

Sherry patted his arm. "I know. Fathers usually get peeved, and make things worse. I wish I could help you, Craig!"

"You do help me!" He drew her eagerly against him, and she laid her bright head upon his shoulder. "You're sweet—sweet!" he said, huskily, looking deeply into her eyes.

Sherry moved so that her face was tantalizingly close, and his arms tightened about her. Then she felt his lips upon hers, in a kiss that suddenly drained all the strength from the girl; all remembrance of her plans for revenge. She forgot why she was here; forgot that Craig had humiliated her, and that he had to pay; that she was going to hurt him—first. She only closed her eyes, and gave herself up to the delirious, delicious ecstasy that was thrilling her from the tip of the topmost wisp of hair to the toes of her small slender feet.

"Sherry—sweet!" he breathed. "Why did you come too late?"

Sherry didn't answer. She lay in his arms, trembling a little, but two tears stole from under those dark lashes, and rolled down her cheeks. Craig kissed them away, found her lips again. And again Sherry was lost to poignant, pulsing joy.

Then abruptly Craig released her, almost pushed her into the far corner of the seat. "I'm sorry," he said. "I had no right——"

"Don't!" she cried, desperately. "Don't, Craig!"

"I've got to!" he went on, tensely. "For it was a mistake, Sherry. I love Mimi; I've got to be decent to her. I'll take you back to the dance,

and make arrangements, but I've got to go, now!"

"Where? Where, Craig?"

"To Mimi," he said, hoarsely. "I've got to. She'll be dancing at the Pyramid in half an hour and I must see her."

Sherry understood; if he went to Mimi, right away, he thought he could shake off the spell of Sherry.

She caught his arm, looked up at him, under the moonlight, with frantic pleading in her eyes. "Craig! Take me with you! Please. Maybe"—the break in her voice was real—"maybe if I see her, it will make things easier—for both of us. Please."

He looked at her for a moment. Then, without speaking, he started the car.

Sherry gave a quick thought to the dance they had just left, as she went with Craig across the interior of the Pyramid, to the small table he had reserved at the edge of the dance floor. At College Hall, there had been brightness and gayety; here there was something almost furtive in the shadowy gloom. Something that seemed dank and a little unwholesome.

"Just in time," the head waiter murmured. "Mimi and Roderick—they dance right away."

They were just seated when the house was suddenly darkened, and a brilliant spotlight played upon the dance floor. There was the slow beat of drums, and the thin note of a flute, then the two dancers emerged from the shadows—Mimi Durant, and Roderick Cruze, her partner.

Sherry knew a sinking of heart, as she gazed upon Mimi. Mimi *was* alluring. And the costume she wore, a girdle and brassiere of striped silken cloth, showed every curving beauty of her slim lithe body, as the



Sherry looked at Craig; saw the rapt look upon his face as his gaze fastened on the lovely lines of Mimi's bare warm body, and a wave of fury swept over her.

two dancers, with cymbals like polished round moons, went through their graceful posturing.

Then she turned to Craig; saw the rapt look upon his face as his gaze followed Mimi, and a great wave of fury swept over Sherry. Anger at Craig, who cared so much for this dancer that he was willing to sacrifice his hopes, his desires; anger at herself because the knowledge brought a dull ache to her heart.

The dance ended, and, after a moment, the two dancers came to Craig's table. Mimi had drawn a quaint Egyptian robe about her, but with every move she made, it parted to reveal the lovely lines of her bare warm body; and when Sherry saw Craig's gaze fastened there, tensely, her rage grew to a surge of hatred. Mimi was playing the game, unfairly.

Sherry turned to Roderick, smiled into his admiring dark eyes. Roderick moved closer, and from then on, she had little time to watch the other couple. Roderick monopolized her completely.

Once she caught Craig's gaze upon her; he was frowning, and Sherry knew a feeling of warmth, as if a candle had been lighted. Craig was resentful of Roderick's attention!

"Let's dance, beautiful!" Roderick whispered.

Sherry nodded, and as they drifted into the maze of couples, she glanced back. Craig's arm was around Mimi, but he was staring at Sherry with moody eyes. Mimi, too, was watching them, her green eyes narrowed, her mouth a straight scarlet line.

"Baby, you're glorious!" Roderick murmured. "You've got me going! I could go on and on, like this, forever, with you, golden girl! I'm crazy about you, loveliest."

Roderick had been drinking too heavily, and Sherry tried not to turn away from his whisky-scented lips. She might learn things!

"I wonder if you mean that," she whispered. "It would be thrilling, if you did, but I'm afraid you're just jealous of Mimi, and trying to get even!"

"Jealous of Mimi?" He laughed, boastfully. "Never, darling! I'm Mimi's big moment. But I'm drunk—drunk with you, beautiful!"

"It looks to me as if Craig is Mimi's big moment!"

Again he laughed. "You're innocent, baby, a lovely innocent. Don't you worry about them! Just stick around with me, sweetheart."

His arms tightened. Sherry lifted those long lashes.

"And if I do?" she breathed.

"I'll do anything for you. Anything! I'm mad about you, golden girl! I'll give you anything you want!"

"Anything? That's a big promise, Rod! Golden girls are costly."

He almost crushed her in his arms. "Not too costly, love girl, if you're nice to me. We'll have money soon, Mimi and I. A big roll. Not piker money, like she got before. Real dough, baby. Enough for me to afford a lovely golden girl like you!"

"That would be glorious," she sighed. "And of course you're not jealous of Mimi! She's just taking another poor fool for a ride—easy money."

"What do you mean?" An instant's alarm sounded in his voice.

"Nothing, Rod, darling. Only I think you're wonderful! And I'm glad you like me."

He crushed her to him, but she turned away, saw Craig and Mimi, their heads close together; they were studying the wine lists.

"Let's go back," she murmured.

"You're frightening me. I want to catch my breath. Please, Rod! If I'm to be your golden girl——"

"Whatever you say, baby. I'm crazy—crazy about you."

Sherry stopped by the table. Craig had forgotten her, now; he saw only Mimi. He was holding her close, looking into her eyes, deeply, as if he were losing himself in their beauty. They had been drinking, the two of them. Their empty glasses were on the table. Sherry stood still for a moment, trembling.

"Craig!" she said, low. "I——"

"Oh, Sherry!" He rose, as if dazed. "Sit down. We'll have a drink."

Sherry looked at Craig, his flushed face, and burning gaze; at Mimi, staring her green-eyed triumph. And suddenly she knew she had to get away.

"Stay and drink, if that's what you want. I'm going home." She began winding her way recklessly among the tables, toward the door. She heard feet hurrying behind her; Rod and Craig. It was Craig who caught her arm, guided her outside to his car, and a moment later they were speeding away.

Sherry could see the grim lines of his face. Mimi had won the first battle, after all. But there must be some way out.

"Craig!" she cried out, after a moment. "Don't hate me so! Don't be so cruel!"

He turned in surprise.

"You've no right to hurt me—now!" she went on, in desperate tones. "Can't you see? I—I love you. Even before you told me I was too late, I loved you!"

"Why, Sherry!" Consternation made his voice husky.

"Oh, I know it's shameless—my telling you this! But you've got to understand! I couldn't bear to stay

there, seeing you with her, loving her!"

Craig stopped the car in a shadowy spot, and drew her into his arms. "Honey, I don't know what to say," he began in troubled tones. "Only that I'm sorry—sorry."

"I'm not sorry I love you, Craig," she whispered. "I couldn't be. Love's too sweet. You were fair. You told me you belonged to somebody else." Her lips trembled. "But I thought that for a little while I'd pretend you belonged to me. I—I had a little dream—that, during football season, I'd sit in the bleachers, and make believe! It was all I asked of life, Craig. Just a few weeks of pretending. And now, I can't have even that!"

Craig's arms were about her, tight, and one hand was gently stroking the yellow hair. "Honey, if only I knew what to do. You're so sweet—and dear."

Sherry slipped both arms about his neck. "Craig, you said she'd understand anything! If she's like that, give me this little bit of happiness, to remember, always. It's such a little thing to ask, Craig! Play football, and let me pretend! Mimi's going to be your wife, for always, and, please, Craig, I only want——" Her voice broke.

He laughed, suddenly, and his embrace tightened. "And you want to be my football wife! All right, Sherry! I'll make Mimi understand! And from now till the football season ends, we'll make believe——"

"That you love me," she whispered, lifting her face to his.

It wasn't all make-believe, that kiss; it couldn't have been. Not for either of them. There was too much poignant joy, too much sheer ecstasy that leaped, like living fire, from his lips to Sherry's to spring into flames along every fiber of her being.

Craig kissed her again when he left her at the door. "We've got to keep pretending," he laughed, just before he left.

She stood for a moment, watching him stride away.

"Yes," she whispered, "we've got to keep pretending."

The next week was a happy one, and Sherry moved around the campus in a maze of delight. She was making a success of J. D.'s mission, and finding it easy.

More than easy. It was thrilling to be known as Craig Elcott's woman; to have the other girls look at her enviously when she walked with him across the campus. It was exciting to hear the students tell what great things Craig would do in football this year. And it was fun to be with Craig so much, even to have him refer teasingly to their football engagement.

The next day after the affair at the Pyramid, Roderick had phoned, and sent flowers.

"You haven't forgotten your promise to me, golden girl?" he asked.

"How could I?" she parried. "That is, if you meant it."

"Every word," he vowed, solemnly. "Mimi is dragging me to the city to-day. We'll be gone a few days, to make final arrangements for the money. And then——" His voice was a question.

"And then, we'll know a lot of things," she evaded. "'By, Rod, and here's luck!'"

Then she sent a telegram to J. D. "Keep bait dangling till first game. Then come and cheer!"

Strangely, Sherry found herself getting enthusiastic about football; wondered why she hadn't ever realized before what an exciting game it was. And at the big mass meet-

ing her enthusiasm rose to fever pitch. It was the night before the first game, with State.

"You've got to win, Craig!" she told him, as the meeting broke up, and they walked slowly away from the hall. "Make a good showing—your start to all-American!"

"I'll try!" he said, guiding her into a secluded walk that led across the shady trees. Then, softly: "I've got to make my little football wife proud of me!"

He stopped, drew her into his arms, and for a long moment held her there, his cheek against hers, his lips murmuring love words into her ear. "Sherry, you're so sweet, so unselfish. You ask so little of me."

"Don't, Craig!" Sherry whispered, remembering J. D. and their bargain. "Don't! If you knew—— Oh, I've got to tell you."

A harsh laugh startled them apart. Both turned to face Mimi Durant, who had followed them down the path.

"Mimi!" Craig cried. "Why, Mimi, I didn't know you were back! Why didn't you phone?"

"I did!" she returned, coldly. "I phoned and found you'd gone to a meeting about the game to-morrow! So I came out and find that you're"—her voice was mocking—"the bright hope of Lucerne's football team! And you promised you wouldn't play!"

"Honey, you'll understand when I tell you there are reasons—deep reasons why I am breaking that promise! I——"

"You've no right to break it!" Mimi flared. "You're an idiot, Craig Elcott! You've let this girl fool you, vamp you!"

"Don't, Mimi!" Craig begged, as he stared his bewilderment at the angry girl. "Please, don't."

"I will!" Mimi gasped. "I'm not

so easy as you are! I went to the city this week, to your father's office! And I found out things!"

Sherry caught her breath. Instinctively, her hand went to Craig's, and he held it, tightly, reassuringly.

"It's all a lie!" Mimi went on, furiously. "She isn't the daughter of your father's friend! She's your dad's secretary! She was sent here as a spy!"

"Mimi!" Craig cried. "You're excited! You don't know what you're saying!" Then, as another figure lounged forward, out of the darkness, he begged, "Roderick, take Mimi home. I can't. I've got to turn in early because of the game to-morrow."

Roderick stood silent, but Mimi flamed to greater fury. "Craig, you can't play football! You can't! I tell you, this girl was sent here for that very purpose—to make you forget me, and be a good boy and play! And she's done it—she's made you forget your promise to me so she can collect ten thousand dollars from your father!"

"Mimi, stop it!" Craig ordered. "This can't go on! This——"

Mimi ignored him. "Ask her if it isn't so!" she shrilled. "Ask her if your father isn't paying her ten thousand if she takes you away from me, and coaxes you to play football. Oh, I can prove it! One of the stenogs was in the filing room, and heard! Ask her, I say!"

Craig turned slowly to Sherry, his eyes begging her to deny the awful accusation. For an instant, she was panicky. She wanted to shout, "No! No!" She wanted to run away—far away.

Then she caught herself, threw back her head, defiantly.

"It's true, Craig. Your father sent me here, hired me to get you to play football!" Desperately, she

looked up into his face, which was fast freezing to a grim, angry mask. "He wants your happiness, Craig! And he knew things that made him do it! You've got to believe that, Craig!"

"Believe you?" Craig echoed, contemptuously. "Believe you—after this? When it's all been a lie—everything! You're a cheat! You had a dream that, during football season, you'd sit in the bleachers, and make believe I belonged to you, just a few weeks of pretending—that's all you asked of life!" He laughed bitterly. "And I fell for it—like a fool! To help you earn ten thousand dollars."

Mimi had drawn close to Craig; now she leaned her head against his shoulder, and caught his hand in hers.

"Don't feel so badly, darling!" she murmured. "You know that I love you, don't you? I knew you'd fallen for her; that's why I looked her up. It was for your sake, Craig; because I care, so terribly. I knew she was cheap."

Craig's arm went about Mimi; his face was ashen, his mouth a grim, straight line. Sherry smiled—too sweetly.

"You're right; I was cheap," she said. "It was silly of me, when I have the chance to make lots more—by playing your game, and keeping Craig out of football!"

"What do you mean?" Craig lashed out. Mimi drew her breath quickly, and Roderick stared at Sherry, as if frozen.

Sherry gazed at them, and hated them, every one; Mimi, green-eyed, vicious; Roderick, a pale, frightened weakling, but most of all she hated Craig. Craig, who had refused to believe her, who had called her a cheat, and turned to Mimi! She wanted to hurt him cruelly.

She looked at all of them, and laughed. "You're an expensive son, did you know that, Craig, dear? You'll cost your daddy ten thousand if you're a good boy, and play football. That's *my* private racket. If you don't play, you'll cost more! Because then, J. D. will know this Mimi person has made good her boast, and exerted her terrific power over you. But Mimi's no piker. She's taking J. D. for a hundred thousand—that's her price. Channing paid that, and so did others!"

"You shut up!" Mimi screamed, and started toward her, but Sherry moved easily away. "You——" Craig caught the dancer's arm, held it tightly, while Sherry went on:

"Your dad didn't tell you, because he didn't think it would be sporting! But *I* can tell. I'm not a sport! I'm cheap, a *cheat*! Sure I played you for a fool, and so did Mimi! Only I was the bigger fool, for if I'd played Mimi's way, I'd have collected a lot more! Wouldn't I, Rod?" She stared at Mimi's dark-haired dancing partner, who had drawn away into the shadows. "You promised me, didn't you, Rod, dear? Out of the money Mimi takes from J. D., I'm to be your golden girl? Your expensive, rare golden girl?"

Mimi whirled, before Roderick had a chance to answer; her face was distorted with rage. "Rod, you beast!" she lashed out. "So you're planning to spend my money on her! Money I've earned——"

"Shut up!" Roderick rushed up to her, tried to put his hand over her mouth. "Don't be an idiot! Hush!"

"I won't!" she shrilled. "It's always the way! You push me into it, then squander my money! Well, I'm through! I'll keep the money—every cent of it! I'll——"

"Just a minute!" Craig broke in,

and his voice was like the cut of a whip, playing upon them all. "If I get this right, Mimi is trying to collect a hundred thousand from dad, and putting the pressure on, by threatening to destroy dad's dream of seeing me make all-American?"

"And marrying you," Sherry murmured. "Don't forget that!"

"So dad hired Sherry to vamp me into line. If I play, I win ten thousand for Sherry. If I don't, you'll probably all manage to collect. Mimi—and Rod—and Rod's golden girl!"

He looked at Sherry and laughed; his voice echoed startlingly through the night.

"I guess it'll be cheaper to play! You win, Sherry! Ten thousand dollars for a few kisses from my football wife!"

He hurried away, then, and the sound of his footsteps fell like graveclods upon Sherry's ears.

In some way, the night passed for Sherry, and then the long morning. A tumult of conflicting emotions seethed within her. Hatred and pain, reckless defiance, and a desperate determination not to weaken.

"I won't be unhappy," she vowed, again and again. "I swore I'd hurt any man, first, and now I've done it! I've earned the money, fairly; even old J. D. will admit that!"

But she couldn't quell the fire that had been kindled in her heart, warming it gloriously at first, but now searing it with torturing agony.

When the phone rang, it was J. D. who answered her tense, "Yes?"

"I'm here!" he announced. "Good girl, Sherry. We'll sit together and gloat. I've got the tickets. Be there in ten minutes."

Only for a second did she hesitate, and when she spoke, her voice



She tore the check into a half dozen pieces and forced the bits into his hand. "Here's what I think of your money and of you! I don't want your money. I don't want anything, except to get away from you."

was gay. "Splendid! I'll be waiting for you!"

When J. D. drove up, she was ready; a smart figure, in a scarlet knitted suit, and a scarlet béret on her blond hair. She didn't talk as they drove along. J. D. didn't ask any questions, until they reached the stadium. Then:

"So Craig's in the starting line-up?"

"Yes."

"How about his engagement to Mimi?"

"It's broken—permanently."

"Good!" J. D. reached in an inner pocket, fished out a check made out to "Sherry Dale" for ten thousand dollars, and pushed it into her hands. "I get a real kick out of paying this!" he grinned. "You've earned it."

"Yes I believe I have," she said, soberly, staring at the check. Then, abruptly, she shoved it in her purse, and closed the clasp tight.

They reached the bleachers, just as the game started, and Sherry knew a great thrill, in spite of her inner turmoil, when she saw the two colorful teams lined up; the State men in orange-and-black, the Lucerne team wearing scarlet.

Lucerne was receiving. The whistle blew, the ball was kicked off; Craig caught it and went racing to meet that great charging team. Sherry thought he would dodge, go around them; but he didn't. Straight ahead he dove, into the maelstrom of players, crashing the first tackler.

Sherry caught her breath, let it out again when Craig shook loose and went on, then caught it again with a spasm of pain as Craig crashed on, making, head-on, for a group of three.

The three hit him at once, and she shut her eyes for an instant. When she opened them, he was staggering on, and two of the three tacklers were on the ground. The third was trying to overtake him, and other enemy players seemed to be swarming toward him from every side.

"That's playing!" old J. D. puffed, when Craig was finally stopped on the fifty-yard line. "If he keeps that up——"

But Sherry knew a great fear. There was something so purposeful, yet so reckless, about Craig's playing. As if he didn't care.

They were lining up again. The ball was snapped, and again Craig threw himself, a human projectile, into the State line. He did it again. And yet again. Each time he rose, bruised and shaken, but each time he went doggedly back to his posi-

tion, ready to repeat. And, each time, the ball was pushed nearer and nearer the goal line. Then across, with tacklers swarming over him.

The bleachers were in an uproar. Never had they seen such terrific playing. J. D. looked proud, and uneasy every minute, swearing under his breath each time Craig battered against the enemy line. But Sherry knew only pain. Each contact, each bruising fall for Craig, was like a blow against her own heart. If he were killed—— Football players were killed, sometimes.

But he managed to reach the end of the first half, still on his feet. He had crashed down the field for another touchdown, plunging through tacklers like a man gone mad. He was staggering; his hair was matted, his face smeared with blood. But as he stumbled off the field amid the shouting acclaim from the grand stand, he turned, grinned, and waved in a mocking salute.

"What's the matter with that boy?" old J. D. jerked out. "He's crazy! Not showin' a lick of sense!"

Sherry couldn't answer, right then. The grand stand was echoing with cheers—cheers for Craig, who had played so beautifully, so recklessly.

"I ought to go speak to him," J. D. went on, undecidedly, when the shouting died down again. "But it probably wouldn't help. He's crazy with playin'. He'll make all-American on this, if he doesn't kill himself first!"

Sherry turned on him, then, her worry and fright driving her to words. "And if he makes all-American, you'll be satisfied!" she flared. "You've set your heart on that one thing, and it doesn't matter if he breaks his neck or his heart! Nothing matters, but having him play!"

J. D.'s bushy brows drew to-

gether. "Well, it mattered to you," he growled. "Mattered to the tune of ten thousand dollars!"

She stared at him, an instant, then, with frantic fingers, she jerked open her purse, dug out the check, and tore it into a half dozen pieces.

"Here!" She forced the bits into his hand. "Here's what I think of your money and of you! You've meddled with his life and so have I! We've made a mess of everything—you and I! And I don't want your money. I—I hate it. I don't want anything, except to get away from here—where I'll never see you or him again!"

She stood up, but J. D. caught her arm.

"Stay the game through, Sherry," he said, with surprising gentleness. "You'll want to know if Craig breaks his neck, or not."

J. D. was right. She had to see it through; had to watch Craig risk his life, even though every minute of it was pain.

She sat down again, dully; watched the two teams, back upon the field now. They weren't colorful now, those players; their suits were muddy, bedraggled; they trudged wearily to places.

Sherry's eyes were misted with tears that wanted, amazingly, to spill over, as she stared at one figure down there; Craig, his broad shoulders hunched aggressively under the torn, once-scarlet jersey, his face a mask of determination.

The second half was like the first, with Craig even more reckless. Tensely, Sherry watched him plunge in, again and again, taking no heed for himself, nor for anybody else.

Just before the end of the third quarter, he leaped through the air, and flung himself in front of the interference men. They went down, with Craig underneath. The ball

carrier was out in the open, an easy victim for the next Lucerne player, but at what a price!

For when the others untangled themselves from the pile-up, Craig was left on the field, motionless.

Sherry gave a little cry; heard J. D.'s muttered oath. She saw the coach and the doctor run from the side lines, and then other men were carrying Craig off the field, a limp rag of a player, in torn, muddled scarlet jersey.

"I'll go down," J. D. said, tensely. "Stay here, Sherry."

There was nothing else for Sherry to do, but wait; and the agony of a lifetime was crowded into those next few minutes. She scarcely breathed as she watched them working over Craig, on the side lines. Then she saw him move a little, his father was bent over him, talking earnestly, and, after another long age, she saw J. D., hurrying back toward her.

"They thought it was serious—his neck," J. D. said, shortly, "but he's O. K. Coach won't use him any more, unless he has to!"

It was a relief to sit there, knowing the game was going on, and Craig was not in it. Sherry couldn't watch; her thoughts were in too much of a turmoil, but she was conscious that State had made a touchdown, and converted; that the Lucerne bleachers were very quiet, and that all the cheering was coming from the State fans.

There was a wilder burst of shouts from State.

"Good heavens!" J. D. growled. "They've scored again—and made their try-for-point. Now they're ahead—14 to 13. That means Craig will play again! They'll have to use him!"

"Oh, but they can't!" Sherry breathed, but she saw Craig run-

ning out to the field to report in, heard the bedlam from the Lucerne rooters.

Then began another reckless march up the field. Again Craig plunged ahead, going in short, thudding drives that were taking terrible toll of his strength, but making yardage every down. But this time there was something different, something jubilant about his attacks. And some of Sherry's fear slipped away.

It didn't seem possible that any human could keep on throwing himself at the other line, going down in a heap, getting up, dragging back to position, then doing it all over again. But Craig did. And, relentlessly, he pushed toward the goal. Then, just before the timer's gun ended the game, he summoned all his strength, all the fine courage in that vital body—and hit the line.

It bent, sagged farther—farther. Finally it broke, and Craig went through. Past the first backfield man, past the second; hunched his shoulders, and rammed straight into the safety. He staggered, but regained his feet, and plunged on, with the safety hanging to him, then broke away—and was over the goal line!

A roar of wild cheering came from the Lucerne rooters.

The game was won! For a moment, Sherry forgot her heartache in the wild surge of victory that seized her. Victory and pride. She caught J. D.'s arm, and shouted with the others at sight of that tousled-headed figure riding on the shoulders of his mates, down below.

"Come on!" J. D. was pulling her along, down to the field. Then she remembered. She couldn't face

Craig again, couldn't bear to see the contempt blazing in his eyes.

"No—no!" she cried, and jerked loose. The next minute, she was running around back of the grand stand, toward a little-used side gate. She would pack quickly, and leave forever.

She heard footsteps pounding behind her, but she paid no heed, not until a pair of arms caught her, whirled her about.

"Darlin'—darlin'!" Craig said, breathlessly. "To think you'd try to run away from me, when I've plowed through this game, just to have a chance to ask you to forgive me!"

"Forgive you?" she echoed. "I'm the one to be forgiven, Craig! For all those things were true! I did hire out to break up your engagement with Mimi, and to get you to play football! For ten——"

"And then tore up the check!" He laughed. "Dad told me—because you found that you loved me! Was that the reason, sweet?"

"Yes—oh, I do love you! I didn't pretend about that! I think I loved you the first time I saw you at the office! And I was crazy with jealousy. That's why——"

He stopped her explanations with a kiss. "We both love each other. That's all that matters."

"But your father?" she began. "What will he——"

"Dad had it in mind, all the time." He grinned. "He told me that, too, down there on the field. But let's not talk, darlin' sweet!"

His arms tightened. His lips found hers. Then all the joy, all the ecstasy, that Sherry had dreamed about, came to rest in her own singing heart.



“Angel, I Said—”

By Jeannette Helm

TONY BOURNE stood regarding the lopsided signpost whose two arms canted in the general direction of Heaven and Hell. The irregular lettering had become so obliterated by sun and rain that he could only make out a

few letters and “1 mile” on the Heaven end. The road to which it should have pointed when straightened up was the poorer of the two, but in spite of rubble and greasewood showed some traces of recent use. It led up from the canyon.

Tony had left the Apache Trail in an effort to find Devil's Canyon, but this below him didn't resemble the description of it. Anyway, it was too late to explore it now. The sun was slipping westward in banks of flaming clouds and already cool shadows were reaching up like clutching fingers from the canyon. October nights come with sharpness in Arizona. Tony spent little time in decision.

"I'll keep on the good side for once," he grinned.

He climbed into his ancient car and started up the road. It was traditionally straight and narrow and the greasewood slapped him viciously. The car did its rattling best and they finally emerged on a plateau from which stretched a panorama of mountains already touched with the pinkish-purple of sunset. Tony gave them only a passing glance. His interest was centered on the car which, seeming to feel it had done its utmost, relapsed into indifferent quietude. All Tony's pokings and adjustings were of no avail. The long predicted collapse had come, the car had gone completely dead.

Tony gave one tire a final kick. What was to be done next? Miles from any garage, no food and only a thin blanket against the cold! Why hadn't he taken advice and not started so late? He rolled a cigarette and waited for his good angel who, up to now, had pulled him out of even worse scrapes.

He rolled another cigarette and still a third. Then he decided to make a fire and curl up before it. As he knelt to apply the match he heard the sound of nearing hoofs from the road. He rose and waved his hat. A slight figure on a spotted roan cantered up and halted beside him in a cloud of dust. The last

rays of the sun caught and tangled in the glowing red of her hair, even the blue overalls and the faded green shirt she wore couldn't disguise the suave grace of her figure. She had the tanned creaminess of skin that shows youth and health, her eyes were sleepy amber. Her chin was pointed, her lips were sensitive and full of hidden laughter. It was a face of artistic talent, a bit gypsyish but with more intelligent reserves.

She stared at Tony's long strength, at his Irish-blue eyes and strong yet humorous mouth.

"What's the matter?"

Her voice was well modulated but she spoke with a certain carefulness.

Tony said slowly, his eyes on her face, "I want an angel."

"What?"

"Angel, I said, and here you come."

She regarded him oddly.

"How did you know my name?"

"I don't. I've never seen you before. I'm lost and I was waiting for a good angel."

"I see."

Something tense, suspicious, in her manner left. She settled sideways on her horse, cowboy fashion, and took in the situation with expert eye.

"Car stalled. What's the trouble?"

"I don't know. Just natural decline of everything. *Ague's* pretty old."

"*Ague?*"

"I call her that because she's a bone-shaker. I was preparing to camp out and wait for morning."

"Any food?"

"Not a bite. Say, is there any place near here where I could get a bed and eats? I've got money enough."

She considered him thoughtfully.

"None nearer than Superior, twenty miles off."

"How do you get there? I'll walk it."

She seemed to come to a rapid decision.

"You'd get lost. I'll take you to our ranch—it's just a little ways beyond here. Maybe, Bob—yes, I think he'll let you stay."

"He doesn't sound hospitable, perhaps I'd better not. Is he your husband?"

She laughed a deliciously merry laugh, musical and carefree.

"Oh, no. He's my brother-in-law and self-appointed watchdog." She checked herself and added with a quaint formality, "The ranch is mine. I can assure you of bed, food and shelter."

Tony removed his hat with a deep bow and asked, faintly underscoring the words:

"And to whom shall I be indebted?"

"Angelica Vare, usually called Angel."

"I knew it just as soon as I saw you."

She stiffened, her amber eyes narrowing like an aroused cat's. She said slowly, "That makes it different. Who are you?"

"Tony Bourne. I paint things that can't escape from me—deserts and wild mountains. I was thinking that it only needed a girl on a big spotted roan with the sun in her hair and mischief in her eyes, then you came."

"I don't remember ever meeting you before."

"And I've never seen you or even heard of you. That's the wonderful part of it—I feel as though we'd known each other for ages."

Her lips relaxed into a smile.

"I don't believe a word you say, but you're rather an interesting

fibber. Come along, we'll see what we can do."

Tony strode beside the big roan. She didn't talk and he was too busy keeping up to say anything. Ten minutes brought them to a rustic gate beyond which a road led through forests of cacti and mesquite to a long, sprawling building whose shallow verandas and many doors reminded Tony of picturesque haciendas he had visited in Mexico. There were the same strings of purple-red peppers hanging against a faded pink wall; bright-blue window sills and blinds, that seen in the clear crisp twilight, stirred his artist's senses.

She halted before the middle largest door and a blue-jeaned Mexican squatting on the steps got up and slouched toward the horse's head. Angel swung down lightly and gave him orders in rapid Spanish. Tony judged from her pointing gesture that she was directing him where to find *Ague*. He grinned to himself. He wasn't in any hurry to leave. *Ague* would help him out there—good old girl!

Angel, dismounted, was taller than he thought, but she only reached to his chin at that. He liked the gallant swing of her shoulders. He fancied a touch of bravado as she said.

"Let's go in, Mr. Bourne, and see what can be done for you."

Tony followed her into a surprisingly large, comfortable room where wicker chairs, wolfskins and Indian rugs harmonized with good pictures and well-filled bookcases. There was both taste and culture; a grand piano in one corner, a large radio which was playing softly.

A man sitting by the low wicker table on which stood a reading light looked up at their entrance. He was short and square-shouldered, his



"I've never seen you or even heard of you. And yet I feel as though we'd known each other for ages," he said.

head even had a square compactness as had his slightly outthrust chin.

"Bob," said Angel, her voice rather obviously careless, "this is Mr. Bourne. His car is hopelessly stalled on the canyon road where I met him just now and I told him you—we—might be able to put him up for the night."

Bob got slowly to his feet. His cold blue eyes studied Tony with evident suspicion, his chin jutted a trifle more. Tony thought her description of him as a watchdog felicitous. He had the friendly manner of one inspecting a stranger

and meditating just where to bite.

The ancient hospitable law of the West apparently won. He extended a square, strong hand and said in a deep growl of a voice:

"My name is Inglis. Guess we can take care of you until your car is fixed. I'll tell Manuel to get your things."

"I've already told him," observed Angel.

Bob shot her a keen look.

"Hm-m-m—— Have a drink, Mr. Bourne?"

Tony gratefully accepted. He was cold and hungry. Rapturous smells were wafting in from a nearby kitchen. Angel had slipped away and the two men drank in silence. Inglis asked abruptly:

"What are you doing in these parts?"

Tony explained that he was taking a painting trip and in trying to find the lovely Devil's Canyon had lost himself. He added that this canyon of which he had caught a glimpse was even finer. Inglis grunted.

"It is, but we don't advertise the fact. We're not fond of visitors."

The Mexican servant suddenly reappeared with Tony's suitcase and poured a stream of Spanish at Inglis. He nodded and turned to Tony.

"Manuel says your car is all wrong, he can't tell where to begin on it. We'll look it over to-morrow. Here's your room—we eat in ten minutes." He added with a faint grin, "We don't dress."

He opened an adjoining door leading into a small but comfortably furnished bedroom. The Mexican laid the suitcase on the chair and Tony was left alone. He quickly changed into gray slacks and a clean shirt, shaved and was ready when an Indian drum boomed in the big room beyond. The table was laid there, the smells were even more entrancing, but Tony forgot food at the sight of Angel. She wore a blue gown with a curiously woven green-and-yellow belt and her hair, in spite of careful combing, haloed her head. Tony thought rapturously of a Luini picture. He longed to paint her with a lute in her hands.

Bob's taciturnity seemed to impose similar restraint on Angel. She replied briefly to Tony's attempts at

conversation and he finally gave it up. The food, served well by a Chinaman, was excellent and so were the cigars and wine. Bob retired with his to the deep chair by the table and read the paper. Angel looked at Tony with a little smile.

"Come out in the patio, unless you don't like the night air."

"I love it."

As he followed her, Bob growled without looking up.

"Wrap up well, Angie, and don't stay long."

"I won't," she promised. She made a little grimace at his back, then caught Tony's eyes and her lips brimmed with a laugh. "Come on, Mr. Bourne."

The patio was back of the house enclosed by three sides of the rambling structure. A covered walk through whose supporting beams one saw the inner garden of palms gave a cloistral effect. In the center a pool gleamed dully in the moonlight, a fountain splashed lazily into it and the climbing gourd vines covering the rough cedar posts supporting the roof made distorted blots on the hard earth. Over all the softly brilliant moonlight fell, blending all crudities into a harmonious whole.

Tony threw away his unfinished cigar and drew a long breath. Angel motioned toward the clustered wicker chairs and couch hammock at one end of the walk, but he said in an oddly hushed voice.

"Let's go out there—by the fountain."

They moved slowly out into the spray of moonlight. Angel stood watching the sparkle of the red-and-gold fish that broke the reflections into myriad facets. Tony watched Angel, studying with deepening pleasure the dulled luminosity of her hair, the cream-whiteness of her skin. It wasn't all artistic delight,

he admitted to himself honestly. Moonlight had worked many a man's undoing before.

She looked up suddenly and caught his eyes. A quick color stained her cheeks.

"Well, how do you like it?"

"I love it—you only need a lute."

"We have a guitar—Josefa, Manual's wife, plays and sings rather nicely. If you like Mexican music I'll ask her to do it for you."

"No—you—*you* should be singing here in this moonlight by the fountain. I can almost hear you."

Something intangible seemed to drop between them. She drew back. Her voice was low, almost frightened, as she asked:

"Do you love music, too?"

"Better than anything else. I studied to become a great composer once." He laughed bitterly. "I found I was only a song plugger. I could make a living at that but I hated it. Cheap sentiment for cheap people. As soon as one good thing came out, dozens of imitations. I got sick of it, bought an old car and set out to forget it all. I can paint a little and live for beauty without some one ordering me to write songs for sob sisters."

"Did you ever write for the radio? Maybe I've heard your songs sung."

"I had an offer from Virginia Deane's manager—you must have heard of her—to write songs for her programs but I wouldn't. Male crooners are bad enough, but I hate female crooners worse. She has a voice like a mongoose."

Angel laughed merrily.

"I've never heard a mongoose sing. That's probably the effect I'd produce if I ever tried."

"It wouldn't be," he said earnestly. "You'd sing like yourself. There's one song I wrote that would suit you exactly."

"But I can't sing," she protested, then as if on impulse added, "Sing it to me yourself."

"I've not much of a voice. I need an accompaniment."

"Wait——" She disappeared into the farthest end of the house from which had issued subdued sounds of Spanish mingled with clinking china, and reappeared with a guitar. She thrust it into his hands. Her face was eager, excited.

"Sing—softly," she commanded.

"I call this, 'Song for a Broken Lute.'"

He began to sing.

"The hand that plucked it once is gone
Where no one knows—

It hangs there on the wall, forlorn.

The song that rose

From out its throbbing wood is still

Forever mute;

But yet the melody imprisoned will

Not leave the lute.

"The heart that loved my own is fled

In silence deep,

And love sits there with drooping head,

Too sad to weep.

The lips that clung to mine that day

Another's kiss;

But in my heart will ever stay

Its song of bliss."

The melody was haunting, recurrent. There were broken rhythyms skillfully introduced, faint suggestions of harmonic discords. It was not an imitation of anything else, rather it seemed to grow with the words and melt into them at the close.

Angel gave a deep sigh. "It is perfect—so sad, but lovely."

"Now, you," he said, continuing to play softly.

"I can't sing—I don't know the air or words."

"Sing it after me. I'll do it slowly.

As if hypnotized by his insistence, she began in a clear, sweet voice that

was tremulous at first but gained in strength. They went through the song together to the last haunting note. Tony's eyes were shining with pleasure.

"Sing it alone," he said.

She sang. The notes came effortless as the breath of a child, clear, rounded, with a compelling sweetness that made them one with the moonlight, the splashing fountain and the fragrant tang of mesquite. She ended with a hushed high note like a tiny distant star.

Tony drew a sudden breath.

"I knew it. You sing it as it should be sung, as I've dreamed of hearing it sung. Haven't you sung before?"

The spell seemed to break suddenly. Angel shook her head.

"I can't ever sing for people. I get shaky, nervous. Bob won't let me."

"You sang for me just now—like an angel."

"I forgot—it was the moonlight and the music you wrote for those words. I couldn't do it again."

"You could," he persisted. "You'd make a fortune singing like that over the radio."

He could see her shiver. She said bitterly, "More likely a flop. I'm cold, let's go in."

The magic of the night was broken. He followed her silently to the door. It opened suddenly and a square bulk stood in the entrance. Bob Inglis growled:

"Angie, haven't you sense enough to come in out of the cold or, at least, put on a coat?"

"I was just coming in, Bob," she said meekly.

As they passed in Bob saw the guitar which Tony had forgotten to lay down. He scowled.

"Thought I heard singing outside. Who was it?"

"Mr. Bourne was singing me a song he'd composed."

"Did you sing, too?"

Angel's face was white but she faced him bravely.

"A little—he said it wasn't bad. Oh, Bob, why can't I? Why——"

"You know perfectly well why you can't! I won't have you doing foolish things like that—risking your health in the cold air. You won't do it again!"

Tony kept his hands tightly clenched in his pockets. There was a bullying ugliness in Bob's tone and words that made him long to connect with his square jaw. How could any spirited girl stand it? He saw her lips compress, she stared at Bob with angry eyes. Then something seemed to give way within her. Without a word, she turned and ran from the room.

Bob walked to the table and selected a cigar. He said:

"I guessed your artist make-up was faked. Been tried before, this breaking down and having to be put up overnight. As soon as your car is fixed to-morrow, be on your way."

Tony held himself in check—by what miracle he never knew. He answered quietly:

"Believe it or not, I didn't come here purposely. I've never heard of you two before. I'll leave as soon as I can. Thanks for your hospitality, and I hope some day to have the pleasure of knocking you down."

Obscurely Bob seemed tickled at his reply. A rumbling laugh came from him as he lit his cigar.

"Fair enough. I'll give you the chance sometime. Good night."

Tony couldn't sleep. The moonlight pouring in his window, remembrance of how Angel looked as she sang his song; the clear sweetness of her voice, haunted him. Imagine

such a gift shut up here, guarded by a watchdog brother-in-law. Where was his wife. Dead? Maybe he wanted to be more to her than a brother. Angel was spirited. How had Bob been able to dominate her so completely? Demons of jealousy rode Tony most of the night. He fell asleep finally to dream of himself rescuing a captive princess with red hair from an ogre that strongly resembled Bob.

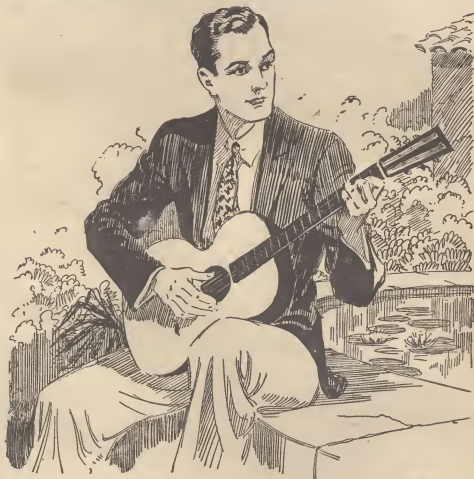
He breakfasted alone with Angel. Bob had gone early to Superior, she

informed Tony, to his unconcealed pleasure.

"Manuel says something he calls a breaker arm is cracked in your car. Bob is going to get a new one for you and Manuel will put it in the car."

"I'd be more grateful if I didn't suspect the prime reason is to get me going as soon as possible."

"It's always that way when any one comes— Oh, I'm sick of it!" she broke out. "Why can't I be like other people?"





She sang. The notes came effortless, with a compelling sweetness that made them one with the moonlight, the splashing fountain, the fragrant tang of mesquite. Tony drew a sudden breath.

"You can. Your voice is wonderful. I'd give anything to have my friend, Leo Eisner, hear it."

"Leo Eisner, the man who puts on the big radio programs?"

"Yes, he lives about forty miles south. He has a big broadcasting station of his own, experimental, on his estate. I was on my way to visit him. Why not go with me and let him try out your voice?"

"Oh, I couldn't—not yet."

"All you need is courage and some one to make you self-confident. You sang marvelously last night."

"That was different. I wasn't afraid."

"Couldn't you do it to-day if I were there? For me?"

"I—I don't know." She got up quickly. "Don't let's talk any more about it. There's time for a couple of hours' ride down the canyon before they get back. Do you care?"

"I want nothing better."

The canyon was an artist's dream but it is doubtful if Tony saw much of it. His eyes and mind were too full of a girl with sun-gold in her hair, whose eyes were sleepy amber. It was a wrench when at last they returned to the ranch.

Ague stood before the door, her bone-shaking self once more. To Tony's infinite relief Bob did not appear. Manuel informed Angel that he had been detained in Superior, but had left very definite instructions to hasten Tony's going. So Tony inferred from Angel's halting interpretation.

"I'll scram," he said cheerfully. "But first I'll accept that invitation to lunch you're going to offer. I'm a mind reader."

Lunch over, he paid Manuel for the replaced part, adding a generous tip. Manuel vanished with a flash of white teeth. The ranch drowsed in afternoon sleepiness as Tony and

Angel stood on the steps. There was a wistful look in her eyes that drove him to a final appeal.

"Come with me to see Eisner. I can get you back before Bob returns."

"I told you it was impossible."

There was finality in the words but not the tone. He said slowly:

"I don't believe you."

Anger darkened her amber eyes.

"Then I don't wish to. Is that enough?"

"It should be a good knockdown argument, as Humpty Dumpty says, but I don't believe that, either."

"Oh, you—you're impossible, too!"

"So I've been told but here I am—a very real possibility. Miss Angel, will you do me one more favor?"

"What?"

"Drive with me to the spot where we met. It's only good manners for a guardian angel to say good-by at the place where she took on the job."

"You seem familiar with their ways, I'm not."

"Won't you do it for me?"

"Silly." But she got in beside him. Tony cast a glance back at the ranch; no one stirred. He put *Ague* under way and they rattled out of the gate. After a few minutes she said:

"Here's the place. Now I'll have a nice hot walk back in order to gratify your ideas about guardian angels."

An idea tugged at the sleeve of Tony's desire. Such a dazzling, daring idea, that for a moment he was speechless.

"Well," she asked, "aren't you going to stop?"

Tony set his foot firmly on the accelerator and *Ague* jumped like a shot deer. Angel clung to the side

as they careered along the rough road.

"Put on the brake. Are you crazy?"

"I shan't stop," he said firmly, "until we get to Leo Eisner's."

An indignant silence. Then:

"I'll scream or jump out."

"You've too much sense for that. Angel, I don't care what happens to me, but if you strain your marvelous voice you'd regret it."

They were on a better road now. Tony stole a glance at her. Her lips were set but he had an odd suspicion that she was making an effort to keep them stern.

"I suppose you know the penalty for kidnaping, Mr. Bourne? Bob will see to it."

"Call me 'Tony.' We're going to see a lot of each other."

"You're infuriating. I won't sing for your Mr. Eisner."

Wisely, he didn't press the point.

"I know I'm risking a lot. I've never kidnaped any one before, but something tells me you aren't going to let me down."

She made no reply. They rode for several miles in silence.

"I could," observed Tony, "turn around and take you back. Bob would have me jailed but I could get a good jab at his chin first. It would be a grand scrap."

"You might as well go on with your nefarious plan," Angel said with dignity. "Bob would certainly try to spoil your face and I don't want murder added to kidnaping."

Tony began to laugh. Angel's lips twitched, then broke into laughter, too. They looked at each other and laughed afresh.

"Don't you see? You've needed me to do this—it just had to come. Angel, you'll do your best for me, won't you?"

"I'll try, Tony. But let's talk of something else—pretend we're just taking a drive."

He saw the nervous quiver of her hands and obeyed. He kept her amused, laughing, for the rest of the journey. When they turned into the showy grounds of Eisner's estate he was glad to see that she was herself again. The Japanese butler said that Mr. Eisner was at home. Angel whispered to Tony:

"I don't want to see him. If I sing he must listen in another room. I must be absolutely alone with you. You understand."

"Yes. I'll arrange it."

He told the man that he must see Mr. Eisner alone first and gave his name. In the ornate living room with its heavy chairs and hangings, Tony left Angel with a last encouraging hand grip.

Leo Eisner was at his piano. Contrary to typical ideas, he was neither short nor stout. He had unruly gray hair, a fine brow and nose, and keen musical taste. He gave Tony a welcoming hand.

"The prodigal's back! How many good songs have you in your sleeve, Tony?"

"Just one."

"You haven't given up writing songs? I heard you were prowling about painting the desert. What's it done to you ever?"

"Leo, I've got better than a song—I've got a singer."

"Where did you find him?"

Eisner's blue eyes became professionally alert.

"It's her. She has a divine voice, but she's ignorant of it—is afraid to try it even before you."

"Then how the devil am I to hear her?"

"I've brought her here with me and she's agreed to try out my song if you'll listen in the next room."

"Excellent! Two birds with one song! Tony, you've been using those persuasive eyes of yours to advantage. Bring her in here and I'll go into the office."

"Not one peep, mind, Leo. You're something of a persuader yourself."

Tony found Angel walking up and down the big room looking white and nervous. She fairly ran to him.

"Tony, take me back. I can't do it! I'm scared!"

He took both her cold hands in his.

"Angel, do you want to help me?"

"Yes, if I can."

"I told Eisner about my song and he is interested. He can make me if he takes it up—get me out of the song-plugging class into something big. But nobody can sing it as you do—feel it. It's my one chance. You'll do it for *me*, won't you, Angel?"

Grown suddenly calm she looked up at him.

"Yes, I'll sing it for you."

She followed him into the music room and he sat down at the piano. He played the air over softly twice. The crack of the door into the next room widened slightly but neither noticed. Tony's whole mind was absorbed in calming her; she in watching him with dilated eyes. He spoke softly:

"Imagine you are standing with me in the moonlight of the patio, by the fountain. There is nobody there but ourselves. You are thinking that your lover has been taken from you but your love remains as the song does in the broken lute. Here's the words on a paper. Now—begin."

She sang. There was no hesitation or faltering. The notes dropped softly as the petals of a rose, yet distinctly clear. All the despair, the yearning of lost love was in her

voice. She was as unconscious of time and space as was Tony at the piano. The last high note rose starlike and vanished into silence.

The door burst open suddenly, and Leo Eisner appeared, his gray mane ruffled, his eyes shining, English forgotten. "Only one person sings like that—and it's her!"

He advanced on Angel and engulfed her hand.

"Are you really back with us? And singing young Tony's beautiful song? Together we shall make it a knock-out for him—you and I."

"But, Leo," she protested, "my voice——"

"The voice, it is perfect again. Your rest has done wonders. You only need the confidence, and that you have now."

Tony emerged from his daze to ask:

"You know Miss Vare? She's sung for you before?"

Eisner laughed loudly.

"Know Virginia Deane? Who doesn't know her? And all the radio fans keep writing to find out when she'll be back. Nearly sixteen months to rest that lovely voice. You were wise to come to me for a first testing and Tony was a lucky fellow to get you to sing his song. How he fooled me!"

"I guess I fooled myself," said Tony in a strangled voice.

Thoughts of what he had said about Virginia's voice, his rather patronizing attitude toward lady crooners, the self-interest he now seemed to have shown, rushed upon him. He was sickly aware of having been fooled and looked it. Angel, after a glance at him, whispered to Eisner.

"Run away for a moment, Leo, please. I want to talk to Tony."

"I go, but I return with a contract for you both, remember."

So Angelica Vare and Virginia Deane were the same person! Tony was sickly aware of having been tricked. "I suppose you enjoyed fooling me," he told her.



"Tony," asked Angel when the door had closed on him, "are you satisfied with me?"

"You sang divinely—it was perfect."

"Just like any silly fan would say it. I'd rather you said I sang like a mongoose."

"Rub it in! I deserve it for being such a fool. I never heard Virginia Deane sing, although you won't believe it. I suppose you knew me at

first and you enjoyed fooling me."

"I never even heard of you, conceited man. My manager arranges all the programs I sing on. Tony, are you mad at me for being Virginia Deane? That's only my stage name."

"Why didn't you tell me who you were at first?"

"I wanted to tell you but I was afraid it might change things. You made it a bit difficult."

"I know," he groaned. "Well, at least, you needn't have let me go on making a fool of myself thinking I was rescuing you from a tyrant brother and giving you courage."

She put her hands on his shoulders.

"But you *were* doing exactly that—rescuing me from a worse tyrant than Bob—fear of myself. Listen, Tony: I broke down sixteen months ago on one of my radio programs, could only croak like a frog. It was terrible for every one. The doctors couldn't find any cause for it but nerves and overwork. They advised complete rest, not even to use my voice for speaking for a year. Bob, who's really a dear and has been like my own brother since his wife died, took me to this ranch and guarded me from all visitors and excitement. I tried my voice a short time ago without his knowing. It seemed good again, but the old fear of failing kept me from further attempts. Bob thought I'd given up singing entirely, and I had. When you came I was trying to resign myself to the idea. Then——"

"I dashed in like a conceited fool and made you sing my song, pulled you out here by main force. I'd better go and let Bob kick me."

"You're acting like a fool now, Tony Bourne. Don't you see if you hadn't given me the confidence to sing I wouldn't be free from fear as I am now?"

"Angel——"

"Wait. Don't you see one thing more? That if I hadn't really wanted to sing *your* song for you, I wouldn't have ever made the effort?"

Tony's head swam with the new ideas her words and tone implied. He burst out:

"Angel, I've loved you from the moment I laid eyes on you. You meant more to me than the song. Can you believe that?"

"I can believe almost anything of you, Tony."

"Can you love me, too?"

"Why else would I have let you kidnap me?"

His arms were about her, his eager lips close. She put her hands against his chest, her eyes were filled with soft laughter and something deeper which thrilled his entire being.

"Tony, do I really resemble a mongoose?"

He caught her to him with an exultant laugh.

"Angel—I said!"



A PICTURE

BEAUTIFUL as a sea gull flying
Is your hand against my throat,
And lovely as a salt sea wind
Your face against my face.

Like a green tide breaking,
Drowning me in a rush of stormy waters,
Is your tumultuous love, pouring over my heart.

MARGARET ORMANDY.



The Jane High Cocktail

By Jesse F. Gelders

THE soft lights of Sky Terrace found an amber glow in the smooth waves of Jane High's hair. The orchestra's music danced in her blue eyes.

Lifting her drink, she smiled across the table at Tom Kelsey.

"We've toasted my trip. Here's to yours."

"The nicest part of it," he replied, "will be coming back and seeing you."

This was a going-away party, just for the two of them. Tom was going on business to Chicago and the coast, and Jane, a few days later, was going to visit Dallas, which had been her home before she came to New York.

This evening, in the magic of Tom's nearness, she forgot such minor matters as the closing of the Economode Dress Shop, where she had been a buyer. The annoyance

of being temporarily without a job was completely lost in the growing, joyous knowledge that Tom was no longer interested in Margaret Stoddard. The three times Jane had seen the girl had been enough to convince her that Margaret was a spoiled, selfish little schemer. Of course, even if she hadn't been, Jane wouldn't have wanted to surrender Tom to her!

A kind of rapt admiration seemed to melt the darkness of his eyes now, softening the firmness of his mouth and square chin. He smiled faintly.

"You're so pretty, you—you make me dizzy, Jane."

"Maybe it's the altitude," she laughed, glancing out at the terrace, which was at the thirtieth-floor level. "I feel a bit dizzy myself."

"Let's dance."

His chin touched lightly against her hair. His arm around her seemed to send her spirit soaring over the smooth rhythm of the music. Then, while the tune still lingered—or maybe it was only the singing of her heart—they were strolling out through the open doorway. Edging beyond a screen of shrubbery, they stood at the parapet, looking out over the city with its lyrical sprinkle of lights.

Tom's arm around her shoulder tightened. Their eyes met for a questioning instant. Then he crushed her to him, and bending, pressed her upturned lips with a kiss that seemed to send them drifting at rapturous heights, while the skyscraper beneath their feet dissolved to nothingness.

"Jane, dearest Jane"—his voice flowed caressingly into her consciousness—"I love you."

"I'm glad," she whispered. "Oh, I'm so glad, Tom."

His arms closed tighter about her. "Jane, will you marry me?"

"Yes, darling."

Her arms, around his neck, pressed his lips harder against her own as he kissed her.

When they went back inside, walking between the tables had the radiant buoyancy of stepping from star to star.

They didn't set the exact date for their marriage, but agreed that it would be soon. It partly depended on the success of Tom's business.

"Because I have a sort of financial obligation," he said soberly. "My brother's family. You know about that, Jane."

"Yes, Tom."

It was his brother's widow and two children. The brother, older, and like a father to Tom, had looked after him and helped him through college, at sacrifices Tom never guessed. When he was killed in an automobile accident, there were debts even against his life insurance.

"So taking care of Lenore and the children is more than just a family duty," Tom had explained once, with quiet earnestness. "It's a moral obligation."

Jane had loved him more for that.

"If my trip is half as successful as I expect it to be," he said now, "by next month everything will be all right."

Looking at his confident, strong face, Jane was sure it would be. Besides, she could find another job and pay her own share of expenses as long as there was need. She wouldn't be a financial burden when they were married.

His dark eyes, across the table, were smiling but intense.

"It will have to be soon, darling," he said. "You're so lovely."

Leaving Sky Terrace didn't take

Jane back to earth. She still was above the clouds that night, and through the days and weeks that followed.

Tom left for Chicago, and she visited Dallas. There she received a telegram from Mr. Martis, who had owned the Economode Dress Shop, offering her a job in a new store he was opening. She came back to New York at once.

She didn't write Tom about it. He was to arrive a few days later, and she could tell him then.

The hotel at which she always lived in New York, had saved her room for her. She was in the dining room, nibbling a salad and nourishing her heart on thoughts of Tom, when a penetrating feminine voice cut in upon her.

"Aren't you Jane High?"

"Why, yes."

She was looking up at a woman of about forty-five, with high-piled hair, and eyeglasses from which a black ribbon dangled. She had often seen the woman about the lobby, but had never spoken to her.

"I'm Miss Meddle. I want a little chat with you," the woman announced, and seated herself at the table with a sugary smile. "You've been charming a young man named Thomas Kelsey."

"What?" The words sent a little shiver of anger through Jane.

"I am Margaret Stoddard's aunt," Miss Meddle stated. Jane swallowed in astonished silence. The woman continued, "Thomas had a great fondness for my niece before you began to—ah—dazzle him. You know, my dear, you are dazzling. But Margaret—ah—expected to marry Thomas."

Jane held her voice subdued, with difficulty. "Had he asked her?" she demanded.

"He will ask her, after you stop distracting him."

Jane's lips opened. This was the most insolent, yet funniest situation she had ever encountered. She managed to speak.

"I'm afraid I'm going to go right on—ah—distracting him, as well as I can, anyway."

Miss Meddle smiled, but the smile was like a thick sirup spread over ill-tasting, questionable food.

"Thomas's business is financed by a man named Harvey Randell," she said. "You may have heard of him."

Jane didn't see any reason to reply. Of course she had heard of Harvey Randell. Tom had taken her to dinner at the Randells' home not long before he left for Chicago, when he wanted to discuss some business with him. But that didn't concern this insolent, ridiculous woman.

Miss Meddle leaned forward confidentially. "Mr. Randell's wife, Lucille," she said, "is a former—ah—sweetheart of Thomas's. In fact, even after she was engaged to Mr. Randell, she lived with Thomas!"

In spite of herself, Jane gasped. Involuntary recollections flashed through her mind. Lucille Randell had looked at Tom with such unmistakable admiration in her dark eyes. When Lucille was alone with her, she had said with fervor, "Isn't Tom wonderful?" Jane hadn't suspected anything more than sincere friendship back of the bright darkness of those wide eyes.

Oh, it couldn't have been anything more! Glaring at Miss Meddle, she felt a swelling fury, as if a charge of gunpowder had been set off in her lungs.

"N-nonsense!" she choked.

"I had an apartment in the same building as Thomas's, my dear,"



Miss Meddle informed her. The black ribbon, dangling from her glasses, waggled wisely. "And of course there are other witnesses I could call, to prove everything."

The woman sounded convincing. Jane fought off a queer feeling of faintness.

"I'm not interested," she managed to say, and started up out of her chair.

"Oh, but my dear!" Something sinister in Miss Meddle's voice re-

Tom crushed her to him, and bending, pressed her lips with a kiss that seemed to send them drifting at rapturous heights. "Jane, dearest Jane"—his voice flowed caressingly into her consciousness—"I love you."

strained her. "Suppose I went to Mr. Randell? If he learned about his wife and Thomas, he'd take all his money out of Thomas's business. You'd be left with a young man without a cent to his name!"

Jane sprang up, trembling with rage.

"If you were twenty years younger," she exploded. "I'd slap your silly face."

She turned, but stopped suddenly. A new thought had fallen like an evil shadow upon her—a thought that sent a chill of fear through her. Others, more than herself, were dependent on Tom—his brother's widow and two children. If his business were ruined, they would be the victims!

Miss Meddle's hypocritical smile had vanished. Her face was crimson. The eyeglass ribbon was quivering.

"Young woman, you are very rude," she sputtered. "You stop seeing Thomas Kelsey. I warn you!"

Jane stared in a sort of horror. To gain her point, this preposterous woman wouldn't hesitate to wreck the Randells' happiness, and ruin Tom and everybody dependent on him.

Jane had a momentary vision of that helpless widow and her children. She recalled Tom's tenderness as he spoke of them. Her heart had a painful twinge, then dropped sickeningly. She clenched her fingers together, and they were cold.

"All r-right," she said shakily. "I'll—I'll stop seeing him."

She rushed away, almost stumbling, her eyes blurred.

In her room, she sat staring at the wall without seeing it. Her thoughts were torture.

Tom—dear, smiling, earnest Tom! What could she tell him? How could she face him? She just couldn't. She'd write. She'd pretend there was a reason—another man. That would hurt, but in the end, it would be the easiest way. It would be final.

She moved leadenly to the desk. It was all unreal, like a nightmare. Dully, she began writing:

DEAR TOM: I guess we made a mistake.

Vaguely, but as convincingly as she could, she told him that she had fallen in love with another man in Dallas, and for that reason, was not returning to New York at all.

It wouldn't be so hard if he didn't know she was here, in the same city with him. Distance, like time, should be a healer of wounds.

She addressed an envelope, sealed it and put on an airmail stamp. Then she inclosed it in another envelope with a note to a friend in Dallas, asking her to mail it from there. She dropped it into the chute beside the elevators, then went downstairs to the clerk's desk.

"If there are any callers or phone messages or anything for me in the next few weeks, please say I didn't return from Dallas." Her voice was lifeless. "I'm expecting a call I don't want to receive. Thanks."

She returned to her room and dropped upon the bed. She wasn't in a dream any more. She had awakened to a reality that was worse. She had said good-by to Tom.

Margaret Stoddard had won. After a while he would love her. Maybe he would throw himself in love with her, to forget that he had been jilted. His arms would clasp Margaret, his dark eyes would glow with tenderness, his lips would press upon her lips. Jane turned her face to the wall, clenched her teeth and closed her eyes. The shut lids forced out two scalding tears.

Next day she started work. She threw herself into it with vigor. It helped her to forget a little.

In the second miserable, lonely week, she told herself despairingly that something had to be done to make her forget this heartbreak. She would have to go out, have dates, have a good time. A good time! Of course, that would be impossible, but trying might help.

Men were always asking Jane for dates. She began to grant them. Each time, she insisted on going only to out-of-the-way places, where she knew Tom would never see her.

She hid her despondency under a pathetically pretended gayety and a sincere graciousness. She didn't realize how effective that thin mask was until the night Cyril Woodson, taking her out for the third time, told her he was in love with her.

"But, Cyril, no!" Her reaction was surprised, startled. The vague, sad night was brought suddenly into sharp focus. Here, beside her in this taxicab, was a tall, plump-cheeked young man, proposing to her!

"Marry me, Jane," he pleaded. "I've loved you from the very first time I saw you."

Dismayed at his intensity, Jane tried to convince him that he was mistaken.

"To-morrow you'll thank me for having said no, Cyril."

But when to-morrow came, he proposed again, and two evenings later, again.

Jane couldn't love him, but she winced with pity as he poured out his heart, almost naïve in its emotion.

"Honest, Jane, you're just the kind of girl I want. You're so beautiful, so jolly, yet so refined. So wholesome."

It was that remark which suggested a way to cure him of his infatuation. She did not have the idea at once. It came three evenings

later, as they were riding past a bar and grill on the upper West Side.

"Oh, Cyril"—she touched his arm. "Let's go in there. I think I'd like a drink."

Cyril was mildly surprised. She had expected him to be. In a little while his surprise would not be so mild. Very soon he would think her far from the sort of girl he wanted to marry.

Inside, a man was playing a piano, and a black-haired girl with heavily darkened eyes was singing. The small room was crowded and there were no vacant tables.

"I'd rather sit at the bar anyway," said Jane.

Their drinks were served and she drained hers. A faint awareness of the alcohol slipped along her nerves. She smiled. She had just as well enjoy this. Perhaps it would soothe her ceaselessly aching memory. She had been pretending gayety. Maybe at last she could feel it.

She set the glass down with the daintiest hint of smacking her lips.

"That was fine. I believe I'd like another."

Cyril ordered again. His eyes, small and pale in contrast to his round, ruddy cheeks, showed a veiled distaste.

At every opportunity, Jane laughed. She really didn't feel like laughing. But she would, soon.

They had a third round of drinks.

"The first one to-night," she said, lifting her glass, and Cyril looked uncomfortable.

Somehow, Jane became engaged in a conversation with a couple next to her. The girl was wearing a green dress and a green hat tilted over one eye. The eye that showed was slightly vague. So was the conversation.

Cyril touched Jane's elbow and suggested, "Shall we go now?"

"Go where? I don't know any place livelier." She glanced at his glass, still half full, and inquired solicitously, "Something the matter with it? Didn't you like it?"

Cyril shrugged. Before he could restrain her, she addressed the bartender:

"What did you put in these?"

"Why, what did you order?" asked the man.

"I don't remember," Jane told him blandly, "but they didn't taste like it."

"Didn't taste like what?"

"How should I know?" Jane asked.

The bartender began to grin. Cyril's face was crimson. The young man who was with the girl in green, bantered with the bartender.

"I'll bet she can mix a better drink than you can, Pete."

"Of course I can," exclaimed Jane. "Once I won a gold medal for mixing a drink. The people who drank it got medals, too—for valor."

"What did you put in the drink?" grinned the bartender.

"I don't know," said Jane. "I play by ear."

People standing near by were laughing. Jane didn't see anything very funny, but she laughed, too. The green-clad girl's expression became vaguely earnest.

"Let her show you, Pete," she urged.

"Yes, show him," other voices approved.

The girl in green linked her arm in Jane's and steered her behind the bar. Cyril rose to protest, but some one pulled him back. The bartender was about to object.

"Let her!" said the other girl's escort. "I'll buy the drink."

"Make it two," some one laughed.

Behind the bar, Jane found herself facing a confusion of bottles

with very colorful indistinct labels.

"This is a pretty one," she said, pouring from it. "And I like the shape of this one."

The bartender watched skeptically. Jane was skeptical herself. A stocky, bald-headed man leaned across the bar with a genial grin.

"Don't forget that one, on the end there," he pointed.

Jane obligingly used it. When she had finished, the bartender added ice, shook the mixture, and dubiously poured it into glasses.

Jane took one. It tasted pleasant and quite harmless. The other glasses were taken up.

"Not bad," said some one.

"Marvelous!" exclaimed the girl in green.

"Make me one," some one else demanded.

Others echoed the order. The bartender mixed another round with the same ingredients. There was much laughter. Somebody forced one upon Cyril.

The stocky, bald man asked, "What do you call this, anyway?"

"It hasn't any name," said Jane.

"Well, what's your name?" he asked.

"Jane High."

"Folks," said the stout man, "you're drinking the Jane High cocktail."

Jane laughed. Things became somewhat hazy. The girl in green was alternately trying to sing and giggling. Her escort was making love to her. Cyril was on the other side of the room, apparently not feeling very well. The bartender was serving more Jane High cocktails. Two men were arguing, nearly fighting, about politics or baseball—Jane didn't know which. Neither did the men.

Jane discovered that she wasn't

laughing. She wanted to go home, but she couldn't find Cyril.

Then, by some blurred sequence of events, she was getting out of a taxicab, alone, at her hotel. Tears were flowing down her face. Tom was somewhere in New York and he thought she didn't love him.

She went through the lobby unsteadily, aware of the stares of other guests, one of them a woman with a black ribbon dangling from eye-glasses that lifted in disdain.

In her room, Jane fell upon the bed, her slim body shaken by sobs. Tom—dear, strong, gentle Tom! Never again would his arms be clasped around her. Never again would his lips press hers, while the ground beneath their feet dissolved and left them drifting among the stars. Tears wet her arm and the pillow under it. This was as near as her drinks brought her to mirth!

Before the week had passed, she learned that the effects of the evening on Cyril were not exactly as she had anticipated. He telephoned, insisting he must see her.

He took her to a friend's apartment, but for some reason, the friend was called away. Drinks had been left, however.

Jane had no taste for liquor, but Cyril kept up a continual urging. She studied him with a mixture of annoyance and amusement.

He did not say anything about wanting to marry her. But he came over to the divan, put his arm around her and tried to kiss her. Then he renewed his insistence that she have another drink. There were a few more minutes of this, and Jane understood. Cyril wanted her drunk. He had been convinced, all right, that she wasn't the kind of girl he wanted to marry. He had made other plans.

With a half-bitter laugh, Jane stood up.

"Sorry, Cyril. You're wrong again," she said, and walked out.

At about this time, the Jane High cocktail was already well on its way to popularity. The bar at which it was originated had added it to the regular list of drinks. Customers who had been there that night had asked for it elsewhere, and finding it unknown, had explained the comparatively simple recipe. The stout, bald man who had genially urged the inclusion of something from the bottle at the end of the row, happened to be a sales promoter for the liquor company which sold that particular product. He introduced the cocktail at some of the city's leading drinking places.

At the bar of the Hotel Brandon, a tall young man with dejection in his dark eyes, in the set of his mouth and square chin, ordered a brandy and soda. A jovial-looking older man who had been standing near by, finished a cocktail, and said, "Give me another Jane High."

The dark-eyed young man spun about as though a shot had been fired.

"What did you say?"

"Nothing," replied the surprised stranger. "I just ordered a Jane High."

"What is this?" the young man demanded, and seized him by the shoulders.

"Here! Here! Be yourself!" snapped the bartender, reaching over the counter. A waiter came running up. Others crowded around, and three pair of hands pulled the young man back.

"What is this?" he demanded again. "Where is she—Jane High?"

Then they explained that Jane High was only a drink. They had

Jane laughed. Things were becoming somewhat hazy. Every one around her was acting silly. Suddenly she discovered that she wasn't laughing. Tears were in her eyes. Nothing it seemed could make her forget Tom.



no idea where it got the name. Nearly every bar in New York City was serving it.

The young man stood for a tense moment. One thing was sure. At least she was in town!

He rushed out, sprang into a taxicab, and hurried to the hotel at which Jane had lived. He went up to the desk.

"Miss High," he demanded. "Is she here?"

The clerk hesitated, then replied, "She didn't come back from Texas."

"Oh!" exclaimed the young man, raising an eyebrow thoughtfully. He

knew that wasn't true. She was in New York, and she was staying right here. If she had been anywhere else in town, this hotel would have had her forwarding address. "Thanks!" he snapped, and stepped aside to wait.

Jane came home, trying hard to keep her dismal mood from showing on her face as she passed through the lobby, when a man came swiftly toward her. She stopped short. Almost before she saw him, she was aware of his approach and knew who he was. For an instant her nerves were high voltage wires while her body turned to stone. The man was Tom.

"Jane!" His voice was triumphant, yet hurt and entreating. "You're here!"

"Yes. But——" For a bewildered second the sight of him had brought ecstasy, but it had died as quickly as a pale glare of lightning. She couldn't have him. She had to send him away. "I thought you understood, Tom."

"You mean, about—about another man?"

She nodded, in agony.

"I see," he said. He took a slow breath and his face set grimly. "I couldn't quite believe it." His lips struggled for a smile and achieved it faintly. It brought a pang to Jane, as if a wound in her heart, imperfectly knit, had been torn open. "Well, anyway, now that I'm here," he said, "can we sit somewhere and talk a couple of minutes? Will you have a drink?"

She didn't want a drink. She didn't want to sit and talk, but she couldn't refuse.

They went into the cocktail lounge, past the bar, and up the three steps to the blue-cushioned chairs and shaded lamps. Except for themselves, the place was empty at this hour.

Jane ordered plain ginger ale. She was in no mood for anything stronger, and she needed all her wits.

Tom related, with an effort at lightness, how he had learned that



Miss Meddle was tight. She banged her hand upon her table. "You wait'll Harvey Randell knows his wife lived in Thomas Kelsey's apartment!" she cried. Jane gasped.

she was in town, through hearing of the Jane High cocktail. She told him something of the incident which had given it the name. His smile was wan. Her light-hearted manner made him think that her life was going on quite cheerfully without him.

Then suddenly, her breath stopped with a click. For coming up the steps, eyes flashing and ready for action, was Miss Meddle! The black ribbon waved like a battle flag.

"How do you do, Miss High?" she asked with a metallic sweetness that suggested a warning shot, fired into the air.

Jane nodded an acknowledgment tensely.



Miss Meddle turned to Tom. "And how do you do, Mr. Kelsey," she asked.

Tom responded uncertainly, and turned again toward Jane with a puzzled look, which all at once changed to comprehension.

"I thought she seemed familiar when she was looking at me in the lobby, before you came," he exclaimed. "I remember now. She used to live in the same building with me."

"Oh," said Jane weakly.

It was as if he had emphasized what Miss Meddle had already told

her. Miss Meddle had taken a seat beside the rail overlooking the bar. Her gaze bored into Jane, past Tom's shoulder. Obviously she had come to watch, fearful that Jane was about to dazzle Tom. With a pretense at joviality, the woman spoke to Jane across the intervening space:

"I guess you're having pretty good times these days, eh, Miss High?" Jane understood the motive of that. Miss Meddle had observed that she was drinking only ginger ale, and suspected that it was to impress Tom favorably. "I saw you come

in one night," Miss Meddle added with her sugary laugh, "when you were quite—ah—well, tipsy."

Jane struggled to hide her disdain. Ignoring the woman, she turned to Tom and asked about his trip to Chicago and the coast. He replied, a bit wistfully, that all his plans had worked out well—that is, his business plans. Harvey Randell was so enthusiastic, he was putting up more money for expansion.

"That's fine," said Jane, recalling in silent misery how important Harvey Randell was in Tom's affairs.

Miss Meddle's voice rose again.

"Oh, George!" She was calling the bartender across the rail. "I'll take a Jane High cocktail."

She had deliberately refused to give the waiter her order, so that when he had gone, she could call it out. She wanted Tom to know that the girl he was with, was no quiet little ginger-ale sipper, but a flaming woman for whom a cocktail had been named!

Tom wasn't paying any attention to Miss Meddle. Jane, swallowing her contempt, succeeded in ignoring her, too. The conversation, a bit strained, touched upon Tom's sister-in-law and her children.

"You should see them, Jane," he said, with a momentary kindling of the light in his dark eyes. "You'd love them."

"I—I know I would."

She had to choke back the lump in her throat. "Oh, Tom," she thought, "Tom, darling, if you only knew! I do love them, because you love them. And for their sake, I've given you up—you, whom I love more than I'll ever love anybody else in all the world!"

"George!" Miss Meddle was calling again, determined that Tom should hear. She had finished her

drink. "George, I'll have another Jane High cocktail."

As she began to drink her second cocktail, her face was flushed. And though Jane was too far away to be sure, her eyes seemed slightly heavy-lidded.

Tom leaned forward across the small glass table.

"Jane, I don't want to persist," he said slowly, "but I just can't believe you've stopped caring altogether. Honestly, it isn't something I've unknowingly said or done?"

"No. I'm sorry." Her words were a painful effort, but she knew this couldn't be avoided. "It's just that I—I don't love you as much as—as some one else."

"All right. I guess that settles it," he said with a twisted little smile.

Impulsively, Jane reached out and put her hand on his.

"I'm sorry, Tom, truly."

There was a sudden angry gurgling from Miss Meddle's direction. She had seen the gesture and misinterpreted it to mean that all her good work had gone for nothing.

"You're going to be sorry," she threatened thickly. Her speech was nearly as muddled as her interpretation. Miss Meddle was tight! She banged her hand upon her table, rattling her empty cocktail glass. "You wait'll Harvey Randell knows his wife lived in Thomas Kelsey's apartment!"

Jane gasped. Now what could she say to Tom? Not even Miss Meddle, crude as she was, would have blurted that out if she had been sober!

Tom's brow crinkled, then suddenly relaxed with a flicker of amused reminiscence.

"Oh, yes. Miss What's-her-name was living in the building," he recalled, "when I let Lucille have my

apartment. She had come from Boston to marry Harvey, but he was having some trouble about his divorce from his first wife. So he asked me to turn my place over to Lucille and come and live with him for a couple of weeks. Some of the folks in the building never did quite understand the arrangements. Lucille and Harvey just laughed—didn't bother to set them straight."

"O-o-oh!" Jane caught her breath. So that was it. Miss Meddle was wrong! There wasn't anything to turn Harvey Randell against Tom!

Jane's heart pounded. Chains broke, darkness split, and light streamed through. She held Tom's hand above the clouds.

"Tom," she said, "there's something I want to explain to you later. But first, I—I didn't mean what was in that letter, darling. I didn't mean any of it."

"Jane! Dearest!" He was standing in front of her, gripping her two arms. His face flashed joy. "You do care, dearest. You do, don't you?"

"I love you, darling. I've always loved you."

She was drawn into his arms fiercely, tenderly, breathlessly, crushed close to him while his lips pressed hers.

As they walked out of the lounge a few minutes later, his arm still around her waist, Miss Meddle's stumbling voice came, as from a great distance. Miss Meddle had forgotten them and was calling the bartender:

"Zsheorzsh! Oh, Zsheorzsh! I want more Zshane High cocktail!"

A tinkling laugh—chimes of merriment, amusement and glorious happiness—escaped Jane.

"Tom, I love you—love you," she whispered, as his arm tightened around her waist. "But there's so much to explain, darling, so——"

He pulled her into a dark corner of the lobby behind a post, and stopped her words with his lips. Under the delicious pain of his kiss, her heart soared to dizzy heights. This time, she was intoxicated with ecstasy; this time her senses reeled, not from the effect of cocktails but from the pure joy of being in his arms.

"Dearest, so long as you love me, no explanations are necessary," he breathed in her ear. Then, with his twisted smile: "No one must ever, ever, ever meddle with our love again!"

Her kiss sealed the silent promise that no one ever would.



CONSTANCY

LOOKING at the stars by night
Floating in their sea of blue,
Watching drifting clouds of white—
I think long thoughts of you.

Day or night I think and dream—
Other thoughts all fall apart—
Sun in east or sun in west,
I dream of you, dear heart.

HELEN MARING.



Half A Wife

By Audrey D. Mountain

A SERIAL—Part III.

CHAPTER VII.

JUDY was still lying face down on her bed in her beautiful big white Regency bedroom when a knock sounded at the door. Judy's sore heart leaped wildly. And yet she shrank from seeing Gene now, much as she wanted him. The vision of his dark head bent so adoringly

over Mavis, his mouth so hungry on hers, the slow insolence of Mavis's smile—— It was too fresh, too hideously real.

But it was not Gene. Only her quiet, middle-aged maid, Sarah. Judy dropped her head in her hands again. Her whole body felt sore from long tension. She had tried to make herself relax, she had even

hoped she could cry. But tears would not come, and she had gone on lying rigid, hardly breathing, her mind spinning on and on in a numbing whirl. Mavis has won. Mavis has won. Mavis has won. The words took on a silly, sickening rhythm. They sounded over and over again in her tired mind with a staccato cadence that exhausted her. If only she could fall asleep!

Sarah moved quietly around the room, drawing the shades, stirring up the sleepy fire in the white grate, lighting white lamps, touching flowers.

Presently she spoke. "Madame is dining at home to-night?"

Judy said dully, not lifting her head, "No."

"Then if you are dining out, what gown will you wish?" Sarah asked respectfully.

"I'm not dining out," Judy muttered, still not moving.

"But, madame——" Sarah began.

"Oh, stop fussing, Sarah! If I don't want to eat——" But it trailed off. What did it matter? With the whole world dead and shattered at her feet, if she never ate again, what difference would it make?

"Madame has not forgotten her engagement to-night," Sarah said after a silence.

With a sigh, Judy rolled over on the bed, sat up to turn on Sarah her dazzled eyes, burning tearless and too brilliant. She pushed a listless

hand through the rumpled silky gold of her hair, and absently smoothed wrinkles out of her smart dark frock, whose huge flaring collar and cuffs of quilted white were sadly crumpled now.

"What engagement, Sarah?" she asked limply.

"At Mrs. Bathurst's house, madame. The shell-pink satin you ordered was for that, I understand."

Judy got up and walked across the thick pale-gold carpet to the fireplace. She felt broken, numb, weary beyond exhaustion. "Oh, yes. One of Dido's scandalous parties," she told Sarah with a mirthless smile. "By all means the new satin gown, Sarah! You must make me very beautiful to-night. You must make me quite glittering and devilishly angelic. The new gown has wings on the shoulders, I seem to remember."

"A hot bath, and a cold shower, to begin. But first, will you not permit me to bring you a tray? Madame looks so white and tired," Sarah pleaded.

"All right. You're a fuss-budget, Sarah, but you're nice. Is Mr. Gorham dining at home?" She had choked back that question three times, but she wanted him so desperately, she must know where he was. If he would only come to her!

"But no, madame, he left—oh, quite two hours ago," Sarah said in surprise.

With Mavis, Judy thought bro-

kenly, that same sick stab striking her heart again. She waved a hand at the maid, who started for the door just as the white telephone by Judy's bed rang softly.

"I'll take it, Sarah!" Color sprang into Judy's cheeks. It might be Gene! Her body sagged in disappointment. "Oh, Ronnie."

"How overjoyed you sound, beautiful! Is it that much of a thrill to hear my manly voice? No, don't tell me. I couldn't stand the shock. Listen, are you going to Dido's to-night?"

"I suppose so. Why?" She shut her eyes. Ronnie's nice voice was so pleasant, his devotion so soothing, but to-night his nonsense couldn't reach through the haze of pain numbing her.

"Then will you permit practically the best-known bachelor left in the borough of Manhattan to escort you?" Ronnie demanded cheerfully.

"Gene was supposed to take me," Judy said doubtfully. "He's out now, but——"

Something happened to Ronnie's voice. It couldn't quite maintain its cool flippancy. Judy, listening, could almost see his uncomfortable wriggle.

"I just saw him with a gang in the rathskeller at the Brass Rail, putting away steaks guaranteed to sink a ship, so I thought——"

With a gang? Ah, no, Ronnie, you gallant liar! Not a gang. Just Mavis. And probably not at the Brass Rail. Sometimes Ronnie's imagination was too vividly intent on details.

She said, very softly into the telephone, "So my loyal knight rides to the rescue? Ronnie, you're such a dear. Come around about ten."

When she had put the telephone back on its cradle, she dropped her

face in her hands for a long moment, fiercely willing herself to put away from her that picture of Mavis in Gene's arms, that picture of Gene's white composure, his remoteness, as if she were so far from him that he could only give her courtesy, nothing more. She would stop the burning of that picture in her mind. She would forget that Mavis and Gene existed. She would stop thinking.

And even as the thoughts crossed her mind, she knew they were lies. She would never forget. But she would go on, she told herself feverishly. None in their world should see her crushed, broken. None should pity her or smile behind their hands at her!

Recklessness blazed up in her, in a furious, slashing flame. She would dance and laugh and sing—oh, she would be very gay! Other men wanted her smiles—well, she would scatter them broadcast! Ronnie would help her, and, somehow, she would find forgetfulness and peace!

There was something a little frightening about Judy that night. She came to Ronnie, a gay smile stamped on her painted mouth, color blazing in her cheeks, the stiffened shoulders of the shell-pink gown flaring like wings, giving her a look of airy impermanence. Her pale-gold hair was piled high in a froth of shimmering, silky curls over a confining twist of pink satin and silver ribbon, and trailing from her shoulders was a long silver cape.

Ronnie frowned when he saw her. "You look as if you might fly away at any moment, Judy. You also look as if you'd enjoy committing murder while you smile."

Judy's laugh rang out. It was not a happy laugh. Ronnie shivered a little, as if an icy finger had trailed down his spine.

"I was once told I needed arro-



The telephone rang. "I'll take it, Sarah!" Color sprang into Judy's cheeks. It might be Gene! Her body sagged in disappointment. "Oh, Ronnie," was all she said.

gance, insolence, a sort of dainty don't-give-a-damnishness," Judy mocked. "Don't look so tragic, Ronnie! There's fun to be had tonight. Let's go find it, quickly!"

"What happened to you to-day, Judy, to hurt you so?" Ronnie asked passionately, flippancy, nonsense gone from his strained face.

"To hurt me! Don't you see how gay I am? What makes you think I've been hurt? Oh, if we could do wild, crazy, giddy things, so fast, so fast, so fast that we never could think again!" Judy cried. Her throat ached and her eyes burned, and her whole body was cold and rigid. But she must not cry. If she began to cry, she would never stop. She would scream out at Ronnie all the dreadful things seething in her mind, she would tell him what she had seen in the library, he would know that she knew what every one else in their world had seen weeks ago. Oh, she had known Gene did not love her, but was it fair for him to shame her so before the watchful, cynical eyes of their little circle? She must not cry. She must be gay, gay! She set her teeth hard, and tilted back her shining head to smile brilliantly up into Ronnie's anxious brown face.

"Listen, Judy—— Oh, my darling——" he began, his hand shaking on her shoulder.

For a second that seemed like eternity, they were still, so, eyes locked together, Judy's hard, reckless smile swamped under the pain in his face. The ache in his voice, the passionate longing to comfort her! If she might bow her throbbing head upon his chest, and go quite into the sure, gentle strength of his arms, to forget everything except the stormy worship of his kisses, the safety and tenderness of his love.

Only—she couldn't ever forget. If Gene had looked at her so, if Gene had only once spoken to her with that note in his voice—— Her nails cut crimson half-moons in her rigid palms. She caught back the trembling banner of her smile, slid from under the big hand on her shoulder.

"We'll be frightfully late to Dido's party, Ronnie——" Her unsteady voice trailed off as she almost ran from him down the hall.

Ronnie was still frowning when they got to Dido's. Judy had kept alive a steady stream of gay, inconsequential chatter, with almost no help from Ronnie. She swept into Dido's drawing-room, to kiss Dido, to draw a dozen men to the brilliance of her eyes, the heady promise of her laugh, as a magnet draws steel. Prince Gregor was one of the first to bow over her white fingers, and the prince was not frowning. A sleepy glitter grew to a blaze in his narrowed eyes as he watched her. Dido called the prince sharply, for nothing at all but to get him away from Judy, as Judy saw with icy amusement, and when Gregor came back to claim her for the dance she had promised him, he pushed his way through a ring of black coats that completely surrounded her.

"Did you find what I thought you would find in your library this afternoon, small Judy?" he asked amusedly as they danced, his black eyes watchful on her face.

"In my library?" Judy knitted delicate brows in an effort to remember something quite unimportant. "Do you know, Gregor, I'm afraid I was a little rude to you this afternoon at Midge Herrick's. I shouldn't have got so angry with you, just because you kissed me." She smiled up at him sweetly, her small head high, her brilliant eyes inscrutable.

"When I kiss you again, you will not be angry, small Judy," the prince said, very low, his own eyes blazing. "That is the first time you have called me 'Gregor,' and so I shall conveniently ignore your not answering my question. Although, of course, you did answer me."

Ronnie cut in then, and Gregor let her go. But a promise that was almost a threat glittered in his eyes and his slow, crooked smile as he bowed and turned away.

"You must be psychic, Ronnie. I was wishing some one would cut in and rescue me," Judy said, laughing, dancing, refusing to think, letting the music drug her senses. But against her will, she relaxed a little, in the strong, safe tenderness of Ronnie's holding.

"I'll smash Gregor's pretty face for him one of these days," Ronnie growled. "The way he looks at you is an insult!"

Judy tensed again. "He thinks he's flattering me, angel. Don't spoil his illusions," she said lightly. Ronnie snapped something she missed, for Dennis Malley's hand fell on Ronnie's shoulder, and he reluctantly let her go.

"You're the belle of the ball, Judy. Listen, if I wheedle Dido into promising us a no-cut dance, will you do a tango with me?"

She scanned his flushed, fatuously admiring face appraisingly. When he was sober, Dennis danced superbly, but was he sober enough now? "I'd love to, Den, if you'll promise not to have another drink until afterward," she told him. He wouldn't do it, and he would probably fall all over her if the tango didn't come soon, she thought, but what difference did it make? Laugh, dance, don't think!

"S a bargain," he grinned. "Don't you forget now!" Another

man cut in then, and before he had danced Judy half around the big room, another took her away from him.

Presently Gregor cut in again. He had not been dancing since he had released her to Ronnie. Judy had seen him standing against the wall, his sleek dark head turning from side to side to watch her as she danced with other men. A little shiver rippled over her taut nerves as his arm closed around her. There was something relentless about him, something that frightened her vaguely. The flame in his eyes chilled her.

"You are ravishingly beautiful, small Judy," he said caressingly, bending above her until his lips were perilously close to hers. "How can that blind husband of yours permit other men to see and touch you? If you were mine I should shut you away in an ivory tower where no other eyes but mine could glory in your loveliness."

Judy turned her head blindly away from his insistent mouth, terror running through her. And then, for an instant, she forgot Gregor; she missed a step, her hands turned to ice. Gene had just come into the drawing-room, with Mavis, flushed and glittering and complacent, on his arm. Dido was angry, and not making much of a secret about it. Gene's black brows pulled together sharply as he listened to her berating, his mouth set stubbornly. Mavis paid no attention, and her insolent smile did not waver as she exchanged a dozen greetings while Dido's tirade went on. Gene's eyes swept the dancing throng, and anger flared in quick blaze in his face as he saw Judy dancing with Gregor, whom Gene so violently disliked. Mavis saw them, too, but she went on smiling.

Judy's eyes had veered back to Gregor just a split second before Gene saw her. When his gaze found her, she was laughing up into Gregor's ardent face, her eyes shining only for the prince.

"You'd keep me a prisoner, Gregor?" she said softly, nestling closer in his arms.

"A prisoner of love," Gregor whispered, so swept away that for an instant he forgot where he was, and turned Judy's small hand upward in his until he could kiss the finger tips, one by one, there on the crowded floor.

Gene saw that, and went white under his tan. He spoke sharply to Mavis, put his arm about her waist, swept her out on the floor toward Gregor and Judy.

Judy tilted back her lovely head and laughed aloud. Gene frowned sharply at that laugh. He had never heard Judy laugh like that, with heartbreak and recklessness and a hard defiance ringing through the clear notes. He was close, so close, Judy thought desperately, and she must not let him know she had seen him or cared that he was there.

She said provocatively, "But I don't belong to you, Gregor."

"Perhaps you will."

Even Mavis was not smiling now. Gregor was her property, and she was not accustomed to having other women poach on her preserves. That it was Judy who set that light in Gregor's eyes was especially unbearable. Judy wondered if Mavis had heard Gregor's last words.

She thought Gene spoke her name. She could not be sure, for Dennis Malley's hand fell on Gregor's shoulder.

"Judy, I've arranged our tango! Come on, we're giving an exhibition!"

"You've had at least three more drinks," Judy said calmly. "If you drop me, I'll never speak to you again, Den!" She actually brushed against Gene's arm as Den dragged her away, and her whole side tingled from the touch, but she gave no sign that she knew.

"Everybody else off the floor, and give 'em a spotlight!" Dido's wheezy old voice bellowed. The lights in the room went down, the spotlight caught them in its hard brilliance.

Judy had not realized until the dance began, how very drunk Den was. He swept her into great, swinging turns, staggering blindly as he came out of them, and once very nearly let her go. Judy heard the catching of startled breaths from the shadows outside the finger of dazzling brightness where she and Den danced, and she heard Gene's furious low exclamation:

"He'll fall with her!"

But she went on, her smile caressing and unwavering in the white brilliance.

And then Dennis slipped. The spotlight lost them for a second, she was no longer in Den's arms, something fell hard to the floor in the gloom. Then a man's arms caught her again, and she was being swept smoothly, swiftly down the floor in the blinding blaze. Her legs seemed to have turned to water, her heart crowded up in her throat until she could not breathe.

Under cover of the music, as she turned and swayed in his arms, Gene's icy fury said softly, "if you have to make a spectacle of yourself, I might as well help you do it right!"

Judy shut her eyes for a moment against the dazzle of stars shooting in her incredulous mind. He had cared enough that she might be hurt that he had left Mavis to save her!

"Did that sot hurt you when he fell?" Gene said sharply.

She shook her shining head mutely, her colorless face lifted blindly to his, as a flower tilts to the sun. Gene, Gene! her heart prayed. Oh, love me just a little!

The room was still. The music flowed on like the essence of a dream. Judy's pink skirts stood out with an icy glitter around her slim legs as Gene whirled her the length of the long room, holding her safely, his knee touching hers in each whirl with just the light support she needed. He brought her out of the whirl, went into a series of slow, flowing, intricate steps.

Gene said bitterly, "If I catch Gregor giving you the eye once more, I'm going to smack him!"

The dream faded, the loveliness broken. Judy sighed sharply. This was just a silly dance with a man who almost hated her. She said sweetly, "Ronnie threatened that, too. Poor Gregor! He seems to be in every one's bad graces but mine!"

"Judy, what's the matter with you? I never saw you behave like this before. I'd like to spank you and send you to bed!" Gene exclaimed viciously, as he bent her back over his arm and stooped to lay his mouth on hers at the end of the dance.

So a long moment, quite still, Judy's mouth trembled and burned under his, fight to keep it from response as she would. Just a part of the dance, nothing more. If it had been Den, she wouldn't have thought twice about it. Den would have meant it more sincerely than Gene did.

When Gene lifted her, color burned in her face again, her eyes gleamed between her narrowed lashes. A swirl of applause swept the room. Under it, Gene snapped:

"And it seems to me Ron is a bit too obvious in his devotion. I'd appreciate it if you'd keep him under control——"

"Coming from you, that's too amusing for words, darling," Judy said, dangerously placid. "Would you mind keeping out of my affairs from now on?"

She bowed carelessly, with a flurry of spreading pink satin skirts, first to the guests, then to Gene. To Dido, as the lights flashed up, she swept a deep curtsy.

Her red mouth smiling, she brought Ronnie to her with a glance, and as the music began again, danced away with him, leaving Gene staring after her until Mavis, her eyes blazing, put an imperious hand on his arm.

Judy went on whirling from one pair of arms to another, went on dancing, went on smiling, went on frothing gayeties to one ardent male after another, until she felt empty, drained, aching with fatigue. Den came back, too drunk now to stand straight, and insisted on finishing his tango with her. And Ronnie, coming once more to her rescue, danced her away.

Her head drooped. She said brokenly, "Take me home, Ronnie. I'm so tired."

"I hoped you'd had about enough," Ronnie said grimly. But his hands were very gentle as he put her silver wrap around her shoulders and led her away. At her door, he stopped her.

"Come in, Ronnie?" She leaned against the door frame wearily, her eyes closed.

"No. Not to-night." Almost before she could breathe again, Ronnie had her in his arms, pressed her head gently down on his chest, and for a long moment held her in silence. She stood still, soothed by



Judy had not realized until the dance began, how very drunk Den was. Once he very nearly let her go and she heard the catching of startled breaths, and Gene's furious exclamation: "He'll fall with her!" Then Gene did care that she might be hurt!



the tenderness of the big hand cupped adoringly around her shining head. His brown finger under her chin raised her head at last, he

looked at her searchingly. Then, with a gentle lightness, and no passion at all, he stooped and kissed her mouth swiftly.

"Good night, my darling." He put her through the door, closed it between them.

Ronnie watched her with increasing anxiety as the days flashed by. Judy felt it, and was sorry that she was making him unhappy. But recklessness rode her feverishly in those days. She was never still, she was rarely at home, she was never alone. Gregor came often, and she sparred and smiled and avoided his touch. "Corny" Malvern, reputedly the most difficult man in Gene's set, laid open siege to her. Dennis Malley, contritely trying to reinstate himself in her good graces after his behavior at Dido's party, beaused her to tea dances, behaving irreproachably, dancing superbly. Corny entertained for her at his place up the Hudson. Gar Naylor took her flying and speed boating, and to the fights at the Garden.

Gene caught her as she came in one afternoon, slim and ravishingly lovely in the riding clothes she had worn for a test flight in Gar's new racing plane. She started past Gene, with her unchanging, brilliant smile. She must hurry to change. Ronnie was taking her to dinner. But Gene caught her arm, swung her about to face him.

"Look here, Judy, can't you even say 'hello' to me? I never see you any more. Where have you been?" He smiled, his black head a little bent, but the smile stopped before it got to his dark eyes. He looked tired, Judy thought with a pang. Then she steeled her heart again.

"Hello," she said obediently. "Gar took me up for a test flight in his new racing ship. It was marvelous."

"Hasn't he better sense than to take you on a test hop?"

Judy shrugged. What did it mat-

ter?—she thought. If curtains came during a long, screaming dive in that murderous little ship, it would simplify life for Gene.

"How about dining with me tonight?" Gene asked soberly, eyes intent on her face.

"Sorry, Gene. I'm dining with Ronnie. If I'd only known——" Judy said it lightly, as if it didn't matter, but wondering wildly if she could possibly catch Ronnie and cancel her engagement. No, he had been out of town. She couldn't reach him until he came for her.

Gene's brows drew together. "This place is becoming just a club for your men friends. I've wondered why Corny doesn't move his traps in, he's here so much. And if it isn't Corny, it's Ron or Gar or Den or Gregor." His deliberate voice tightened a bit on Gregor's name.

Judy shrugged again, and thrust her trembling hands deep into the pockets of her riding trousers, lest he see how he had shaken her.

"I've got to hurry and change," she said mildly, trying to move away from the touch of his hand. If he'd only take her in his arms, if he'd only see that her activities with other men were just a screen she had raised in her desperate unhappiness over losing Gene.

He had not released her arm. Now, quite unexpectedly, but very quietly, he did take her into his arms. "My sweet little Judy," he said, in a stifled voice. Trembling in his hold, Judy let her head drop forward against him, and waited, her whole soul hushed. He put his face down against her, and she could feel his hot cheek burning through her thick, soft hair.

But he did not speak again. And after a long moment, he kissed her hair slowly and released her as

quietly as he had taken her. Then, without a word, he left her and went quickly up the stairs to his room. She stared after him, sick with disappointment, wondering why he had acted so. When she went up to change, his door was closed, and she did not see him again that night.

The shadows deepened under her soft brown eyes. Delicate little hollows etched themselves under her cheek bones; her hands came to look almost transparent. But now she seemed caught up in a vicious circle, a treadmill of meaningless laughter, of ceaseless rushing about, of saying the same things over and over. She could not escape.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Why did you wake me, Sarah?" she wailed. "You know I didn't get in until six this morning, and it's only ten! Go away!"

"It is the senior Mr. Gorham who demands to see you, madame!" Sarah said urgently, her respectful but firm hand on Judy's shoulder.

"Who?" Judy's eyes flew open and she sat up abruptly among her tumbled silky sheets and soft blankets. "Sarah, you don't mean—good heavens, you can't mean Mr. Gene's father!"

But Sarah was unshakable. The senior Mr. Gorham demanded to see madame, and had given Sarah orders she knew better than to disobey.

"Of all the unholy hours to come calling, for the first time!" Judy gasped and flew for her bath. What on earth did he want? Could it be about last night?

"Has Mr. Gene left the house yet, Sarah?" she called.

"An hour ago, madame."

Judy wondered if Mr. Gorham had known Gene would be away.

But that was nonsense. Why should he arrange to see her alone, when he had, since her wedding day, ignored her?

"Bring me an orange juice and coffee, Sarah. I can't go down breakfastless, or at least I won't," she added under her breath, sliding a gold dress of thin wool over her shining head, buttoning the big wooden buttons that marched from throat to hem, and smoothing the round, childish collar. She hesitated over rouge, decided against it. She was pale, and her eyes were heavy from lack of sleep, but the shadows around them, her delicate pallor, only made her eyes look clearer and her skin fresher. Besides, Mavis always used a great deal of make-up. Perhaps Mr. Gorham would appreciate the contrast. She wished wistfully that she could win his liking.

Mr. Gorham waited in the library, a flood of thin, early-spring sunshine glinting on his white head, so bright against the healthy bronze of his skin. Judy went in composedly, but a little warily. He looked so grimly inscrutable and heartbreakingly like Gene.

"Good morning, Mr. Gorham." He rose, bowed icily, waited until she was seated, sat down again. Judy folded her hands childishly in her lap, and looked at him expectantly, her clear eyes shining, a smile ready to come if he chose to be kind.

But apparently he did not so choose.

He said coldly, "Young woman, you married my son, and you now bear his name. It seems to me the least you can do is to live in such a manner that you will dishonor that name as little as possible!"

Judy's head went back on her delicate neck as if he had struck her in the face. After a moment, she said softly, her hands gripped so

fiercely that the knuckles showed white:

"Just how do you think I have dishonored that name, Mr. Gorham? Or perhaps," she added politely, "I have misunderstood your meaning."

"You haven't misunderstood," he returned grimly, "or if you have, I can make myself still clearer. You're chasing all over creation with Heaven only knows how many single men, one of your escorts has twice been arrested for speeding while you were with him, and last night you were taken to the station house for being with Gar Naylor when he got into a brawl in some place in the Village."

So it was last night that had brought him! Judy stood up, her hand lifted to stop him. "I'm flattered that you take the trouble to check so closely on my activities, Mr. Gorham. Come to the point. What about all this?" She was very white, but her eyes were steady and her head was gallantly high as she faced the fierce old man.

"Do you think that is admirable behavior for Gene Gorham's wife?" he flung at her.

"Gene has not objected. If you disapprove, why not speak to him about it?"

"Gene is a soft fool, if he can't control his own wife," the old man said, his voice shaking with rage. "Marriage is a more binding contract than a dinner engagement, young woman! Don't drag the name of Gorham into the gutter with you!"

Judy smiled softly. "You might speak to Gene about that, too. He may be interested in your views on what constitutes keeping a marriage agreement. I'm not."

The shot told. Mr. Gorham could not possibly be ignorant of Gene's pursuit of Mavis, nor that Judy's

life had been discretion's self before Gene broke his vows. Knowing that, he dared to come here and bluster and rage at her, trying to frighten her into docility by waving the haughty flag of the Gorham name in her face! She crushed down her anger, and pulled the white rope by the mantel.

"Why, you—you——"

Judy cut him off. "It's easy to see where Gene got his violent temper. You should have taught him better control when he was younger, but I suppose, handicapped as you yourself are——" The butler came through the library door and bowed expectantly.

"Mr. Gorham is leaving, Feltrey," Judy said evenly, her steady eyes on her uninvited guest. "Good morning, Mr. Gorham. Will you show him out, please, Feltrey?"

A glint of grudging respect showed in the old man's shrewd eyes. She had not made a scene, but she would not be bullied. And suave insolence was a language he could understand. For a moment, Judy thought he would flare out at her, even before Feltrey, but then, as she stood lightly erect before him, smiling, unafraid, unimpressed by him and his name and his millions, he bowed shortly, and swung on his heel.

Judy's composure broke then. It was a long time before she could breathe evenly again, a long time before her heart stopped pounding and color came back to her face.

She wandered about restlessly all day, but she would not leave the apartment. It was hard, that day, to live up to her new religion of "Don't Think." Mr. Gorham's call had sharpened her wonder as to how all this must end, and thinking, bitter and desperate and hopeless thinking, had been inescapable.

When Feltrey announced Prince Frachini at cocktail time, she greeted him almost eagerly. His thin, sharp-featured face came alive when he looked down at her. As always, he was faultlessly groomed, his well-tailored dark clothes fitting his thin, graceful body with an easy elegance. His small black mustache affected Judy disagreeably, but the smile under it showed very white teeth; his hair had the luster of black satin. On one narrow hand he wore a heavy, jeweled ring with the seal of his house cut in the emerald.

He said, "How very fortunate I am to find you alone, small Judy!" His eyes, those brilliant black eyes that never looked at her without a flame growing in them, swept her now from the absurd scraps of gold sandals strapped on her small feet to her pale-gold curls, bound with a filigree of brighter gold. A coral chiffon tea gown swathed her white throat, the enormous sleeves caught into gold kid bands at her slim wrists, the wide skirt floating around her slender body like a rosy cloud.

"Every time I see you, you are more exquisite than before," Gregor said tenderly, kissing her fingers. "Will you give me a cocktail and talk to me a little?"

She rang, and sat down before the fire in the living room. When Feltrey had brought the cocktails and gone out again, Gregor came over and sat beside her. He lifted his slim glass with a smile.

"To your beautiful eyes, small Judy. They have a haunting sadness, but I could wish, lovely as they are, that they were happier eyes. Beautiful women should be a little unhappy, but not so much as you are now."

"That's unfair, Gregor. I can't drink to my own eyes, can I?"

"You could drink to my wish to see happiness glowing in them."

"Ah, yes, but why not simplify it, and drink just to happiness?" Judy said idly, hardly knowing, certainly not caring, what she said.

"To happiness. Yours—and mine," Gregor agreed softly, and drained his glass.

Judy set hers down, having barely touched it. Gregor took her hand, sat smoothing the soft fingers on his own narrow palm, his eyes intent on his agreeable companion.

"Such a lovely little hand." He turned it over and bent to crush his face against the fragrant, silky palm. "You're an enchantress, small Judy. I have gone quite mad about you!" he whispered. His lips moved blindly, passionately, up her wrist, her arm. He laid his hot cheek yearningly against the smooth white flesh. Then his flushed face lifted. "Let me teach you what happiness is, Judy! I could drive the sadness from your lovely eyes!"

"Gregor, please!" she begged. His passion was so stark it frightened her, and the game was no longer amusing.

"You were angry once when I kissed you. I told you when I kissed you again you should not be angry. I shall kiss you now, small Judy, and afterward, I shall hear you beg me to kiss you again," his hot, arrogant whisper said.

Indignant, really afraid now, Judy tried to draw away from his demanding hold, but his arms were like steel. She fought him desperately. But then quite suddenly, she stopped struggling, melted back into his arms, gave her mouth passionately to his. She heard his triumphant murmur through a whirling haze. The kiss sickened her. Nausea and blackness swelled in her until she wanted nothing but to



"You're an enchantress, small Judy. I have gone quite mad about you!"
Gregor whispered. He raised his glass. *"To happiness. Yours—and mine,"* he said softly, and drained his glass.

strike and strike again at the lips ravaging hers. But when she broke from his hold and lifted her head,

she was smiling. She got up, turned slowly.

"Come in, Gene. Gregor dropped



Gifts

FOR EVERY SMOKER



WOULD YOU MIND
DASHING BACK FOR
A PACKAGE OF
TURRETS



Quality and Mildness
Turret
CIGARETTES
SAVE THE POKER HANDS

by for cocktails. Will you have one?"

And how was Gene to know that she had heard his step in the hall, and only her knowledge of his presence had sent her back into Gregor's arms?

Gregor got up, his face tight and inscrutable. Gene still stood by the door, an ashy pallor drowning his tan, his eyes blazing. Gregor did not look toward him. He bowed to Judy.

"You have been most kind. Thank you," he said softly.

"Must you go, Gregor?" Judy's smile did not waver, but she let him go without further protest. She was glad to be done with him. He went past Gene, bowing slightly as he passed.

Gene's blazing eyes had not left her face. She turned her smile on him, that bright, careless smile that told nothing of her shaking knees and her racing, thudding heart.

"Come in, Gene. You look uncomfortable there," she said lightly.

"Judy, how—how could you?" he said roughly, hoarsely, coming swiftly across the room to stand before her.

She sat down on the divan, looked into the fire, a reminiscent smile tugging at the corners of her mouth.

"I suppose it was bad taste," she agreed, maddeningly calm. "It's odd, isn't it, how that sort of thing seems to run in families? If I hadn't seen you making love to Mavis, I might never have thought of letting Gregor kiss me."

It was the first time she had mentioned finding Mavis in Gene's arms, here in Judy's own house. All her senses seemed numb, or she could not be saying these incredible things to Gene, she could not persist in her rôle, could not mention his betrayal of her trust so coolly. This woman

who seemed so hard and brittle and reckless on the surface suffered so hideously underneath, but she must not let Gene know that.

Dark color burned up into his face. "If you must philander, I'd think you could find more decent chaps!" he grated. "Gregor's rotten clear through, and you know it!"

Judy inspected her nails critically, she had even dared to hum a few bars of a popular song. She broke off, said quite lightly:

"Oh, come, Gene! He's a little crude in his technique, but he has something that is quite irresistible!"

Gene stared at her, actual pain in his eyes. "You—you've changed unbelievably—from the gentle, sweet child I married," he said slowly.

After a moment of stricken silence, she lifted eyes deep and dark with longing in her delicate young face. "But you didn't want sweetness and gentleness, Gene. You—you told me yourself," she went on breathlessly, "that I needed arrogance, insolence, a sort of dainty don't-give-a-damnishness, and now that I have them, you don't like that either. I do them badly still, of course. They're so new to me yet," she ended piteously. He was so blind!

His brown hand cupped around her cheek with a new wistfulness. "That isn't all I told you," he said quite gently. "I told you I'd be good to you. And I haven't been, have I? Between us, we seem to have made a swell mess of this marriage."

Judy said, still with that breathless eagerness, that shy appeal, "We might save it yet. Sit here beside me. We see so little of each other. Suppose—suppose we dine together and talk things over."

Gene did not sit down. His hand fell from her cheek, an uncomfort-

able flush rose in his face. "I'm so sorry, my dear. I've already made a dinner engagement. I just came home to change."

Judy sat, turned to chill marble. "Mavis!" she whispered starkly. And though she waited for endless, dragging seconds, aching to hear his denial, it did not come. He said nothing at all. And presently, very quietly, she heard him go away. After a long time she relaxed, on a hard, shuddering sigh, and dropped face down on the white cushions. For a few moments they had seemed so close, so dearly close once more. He had seemed almost hers. And now he was remote again, infinitely removed by his devotion to Mavis. Whenever her claims on him conflicted with Mavis's desires, it was always she who lost, never Mavis. Judy writhed in unbearable shame, hid her face more deeply. She had trampled on her pride to *ask* him to dine with her! But, oh, she had wanted him so!

CHAPTER IX.

For three days, she saw Gene only once, and then he spoke her name with a grave courtesy as he passed her in the hall as she was coming in and he was going out. She let him go, and went on into the living room, her head drooping, a great weariness weighing her down. Nothing in life seemed worth while. She sat for a long time before the fire, staring into the flames, not really thinking, just submerged under wave after wave of black unhappiness that rolled over her and smothered her very soul.

The next afternoon Ronnie came in. She had telephoned him to come, so driven by a feverish restlessness that she could not face the thought of an hour alone. And of

all she knew, only Ronnie's presence seemed bearable.

His eyes hardly left her face. She talked, laughed, moved about the room, almost hysterical in her brightness. He spoke in short, clipped phrases, and strain cut deeper the lines around his fine, gentle, disciplined mouth.

"How about a cocktail, Ronnie? A whole flock of cocktails?" she asked gayly.

"I'd rather have tea."

"You lie like a gentleman, just because you think cocktails aren't good for me," she protested, laughing as she rang for Feltrey.

"Well, at least tea is better for you," Ronnie said mildly. Judy wished for a wild moment that she had not sent for him. His anxiety for her was too sharp to-day. She felt so close to the cracking point that his solicitude was just one more force to fight. It would be so easy, so terribly easy, to let Ronnie comfort her!

Feltrey brought the tea things and Judy sent him away. She poured Ronnie's cup and picked up her own. But the cup tilted, the saucer slipped from her shaking hand, both of them shattered with the delicate ringing of expensive china on the hearth. And suddenly, Judy was crying bitterly, in a storm of cruel sobs that racked her slight body.

With a muffled curse, Ronnie set down his cup, reached her in one long stride, swept her up in his arms, and carried her to the deep chair from which he had just risen. He sat down with her cradled close, close against his heart, held her with a starved tenderness as if he never again could let her go.

"Judy, my darling—oh, my sweet girl, you break my heart! I can't stand it any longer!" he declared

passionately. "I love you so terribly, I can't endure seeing you unhappy. Judy, my darling, this can't go on. It's killing you!"

"I shouldn't have asked you to come," she sobbed, burrowing her face deeper into his shoulder, clinging to him blindly, her desperate hands beating against his chest.

His big brown fingers closed over them, forced them into quiet. "This had to happen sometime, sweet," he told her hoarsely. "I've been completely mad about you ever since that first moment I met you at Dido's. I thought I would lose my mind when you married Gene, and there wasn't a thing on earth I could do but try to make it as easy for you as I could. But there are things a man can't endure, and this is one of them," he finished grimly.

Awed by the depth of that hungry passion in his voice, Judy raised her tear-streaked face to look at him. "What do you mean?" she whispered.

His brown face had drained of color, his fine gray eyes were almost black, the pupils were so distended. As she watched him, his mouth twitched with a heartbreaking tenderness. He lifted the little hands he still held, his thumb and finger encircling both frail wrists.

"Look at your poor wrists, sweetheart! They're so thin they frighten me!" he said urgently. "The look in your eyes haunts me until I can't sleep. You can't stand much more of this strain, or it will kill you." He shivered, put his colorless face down against hers as if the very thought pierced his heart. "Come away with me, my darling! Give me a chance to love you, to cherish you forever and ever, to teach you really to laugh again! Let me bring back peace to your beautiful eyes! Judy, Judy!"

Swiftly, irresistibly, inevitably, Judy heard Gene's voice, when he had come to her room drunk and demanded that she marry him that afternoon, "to beat Mavis and her moth-eaten title to the punch!" Not a thought or a word for her. Only his obsession for revenge on Mavis. How worlds removed from that blind selfishness was Ronnie's desire for her happiness, her well-being!

"You love me very much, Ronnie," she whispered, a sword through her heart. How hopelessly unfair life was!

"I adore you. You're sun and moon and stars to me. You're all my world," he said brokenly.

And now she must plunge the sword into his heart, too. "You know I don't love you that way. I love you, Ronnie, dear, but not enough."

"You would, Judy. I swear it!" he said eagerly. "You like me, you trust me, you already love me a little. I'll ask so little, beloved! Just to love and serve and cherish my beautiful wife through all the perfect years ahead. Somehow, somehow, my heart, I'll find happiness for you!"

Ah, thought Judy, stricken, she had wanted all those things for Gene, she had tried to do all of them, and how tragically useless it had been! She had asked so little, Gene had liked and trusted her, she had wanted nothing more than to love and cherish him. And in how little a while had life defeated her!

"You humble me, Ronnie. I don't deserve love like that," she said, very low.

He smiled at her gravely. "You deserve the world. The gold of sunshine, the silver of moonlight, the stars for jewels, the essence of a million roses for your perfume, the sweetness of spring night wind—

everything beautiful and precious is not half rare enough for you," he said extravagantly.

Bitterness seared across Judy's heart. She would probably be wise to accept Ronnie. She had loved Gene too much, and what had it gained her, except sorrow and suffering? With Ronnie, it would be he who did the loving, and surely she would not, could not, be hurt so much again. And, oh, to know peace! To know serenity, and unshadowed laughter, and surcease from the torture of vain hopes! Wouldn't Ronnie's love, his unfailing devotion and tenderness, drug her weary heart into quiet? Wouldn't his strength bear her up in the blackness of bitter hours? Wouldn't she, even as he said, come some day to love him as he deserved? Perhaps not with the mad ecstasy of her love for Gene, but a quieter, wiser, richer love. People did learn to love again, didn't they?

"Judy, can you tell me what you're thinking? Talk it over with me," he begged.

She touched his cheek gently where the healthy color had come back now, because she was at least allowing him to hope.

"I don't know what to say, Ronnie, dearest," she told him painfully. "I hadn't thought of this. I knew—I couldn't help knowing—that you loved me, and I was so grateful to you. But it would be so unfair to you, my dear."

He took an immaculate handkerchief out of his pocket, carefully blotted the tears still streaking her delicate face, still sopping on her lashes, stuck together in wet points like an unhappy baby's.

"Suppose you let me worry about me, when the time comes," he said cheerfully, absorbed in his task.

"Divorce isn't difficult, Judy. In only a few weeks, you could be free, and I could claim my wife. If you'll trust me with your sweet self, I'll take you abroad for a long time, away from everything and everybody you've known here. And when we come back, you will have forgotten that you ever knew a shadowed moment, my heart."

That would mean away from Gene, Judy thought with a swift, stabbing pain. But of course if she married Ronnie, she could not go on loving Gene and suffering over him.

"Will you give me a little time to think about it, dear? I can't decide instantly." She smiled at him anxiously.

He turned his head swiftly, to kiss the small fingers still clinging to his cheek.

"I know, sweet. I won't hurry you—any more than I can help." His smile was a bit twisted, but steady. "I've waited all these months, without hope. Now it will be harder, when there may be a chance for me. If you have a spark of tenderness for me, darling, you won't make me wait long. Judy, just to help me wait, will you kiss me?"

Blindly she turned her face to his, the velvety flame of her mouth yielding its sweet warmth to his keeping. Hardly breathing in his fierceness of control, lest he frighten her who was so nearly won, Ronnie's lips touched hers very gently. The kiss deepened into the very essence of his love for her, disciplined, glorified by the greatness of nobility, yet with hard-banked fires leaping under its tenderness. The kiss left Judy's pulses unstirred, her breathing unhurried, yet it did much for Ronnie's cause in her heart. She would be safe beyond all telling, in



She came slowly across the room, put out her hands to him. "Gene, darling, I've been so lonely for you. Oh, Gene, love me—just a little! I love you so terribly I can't do without you."

the strong, steadfast keeping of a love like that.

"Thank you," he whispered when he raised his head.

She smiled at him mistily. "Now I'm going to ask you to go, Ronnie. I want to be alone for a while, to think. I'm so proud that you love me, and I promise I'll not keep you waiting long for my answer."

He rose with her, put her gently back into the deep chair, lifted her hands to kiss them, back and palm and finger tips. "I should like to ask God to put the answer in your heart," he said, very low, and left her swiftly.

Judy sat on in the big chair, her head in her hands. Dusk crept in at the high windows, the fire died to nothing. Feltrey came in, turned on one dim lamp, saw his young mistress crouched in her chair, unstirring, and was wise enough to steal silently away. Dinner time came and passed, Feltrey came again uneasily to look in upon Judy, but again he went silently away.

When at last Judy stirred, stiffly, and moved her cramped body, she thought she must for a little while have slept. Or perhaps it was only a waking dream. But strong in her mind, throbbing in her blood, singing in her very heart, was the certain knowledge of what she must do. She must humble her pride, she must hide her hurt, she must be everything gracious and lovely and irresistible. She must go to Gene, she must make one last attempt to win him. Else she could not ever go to Ronnie with untroubled conscience. Her last moments with Gene had found him kind, troubled, turning swiftly from his flare of jealous rage to distress over her unhappiness. Perhaps— The very possibility, the bare chance, sent a hot surge of blood burning up into her

face. An ecstasy of hope, half brave, half delicious terror, fluttered like wings in her heart. She would go, this once, to the man she loved.

It was late when Gene came in. He went directly to his room, shut the door. A few moments later, Judy slipped noiselessly through her dressing room, through Gene's, tapped lightly on his closed bedroom door, and then, without waiting for his answer, opened it and stepped through.

He had taken off his evening coat and vest. They and his white tie and collar were flung across a chair. He had put on a heavy gold Chinese brocade dressing gown and wrapped a silk scarf around his throat. When Judy went in, he was standing in the center of the severely beautiful big room, his dark smooth head bent, staring at the floor. He swung his head slowly to look at her, said gravely:

"You, Judy?"—surprised, but not, she thought gladly, displeased.

She stood quite still for a moment, outlined like a figure in a dream against the satiny dark wood of the high, stately door.

Her negligee, of dull-silver lace, fitted her exquisite body like its own perfect flesh, from shoulder to knee. From there to the floor, the cobwebby lace foamed in a moonlight cascade around her bare white feet, strapped into small scarlet sandals with giddy silver heels. A pulse throbbed like a second heart in her bare white throat, her red mouth burned with an ardent flame, her shining pale-gold curls fell back softly from the sweet hunger in her honey-brown eyes.

She came then, slowly, across the thick carpet to him, put out her hands to him. Those soft palms were scented with the perfume he

liked best, and cupped in their rosy whiteness was all her heart, loyal to the death, beating only for him.

"Gene——" Her breath failed her. Oh, would he help her? "Gene," she tried again, her sweet mouth tremulous. "Gene, darling, I've been so lonely for you."

Shyness swamped her then, and she stood still, her hands pleading with him.

"Judy!" he breathed. It was the first time she had come to him. A flame kindled in his dark eyes as they swept her from silver heels to lustrous, loosened curls that begged for the dear roughness of a man's tender hands.

His fingers closed tightly around the frail wrists, with their cupped, pleading fingers. Judy looked down at them and smiled, and then slowly, with heartbreaking sweetness, her eyes lifted longingly to his face.

"I bring you my heart, Gene. Won't you take it?" she whispered.

"Judy, my sweet Judy, I don't deserve you," he said huskily. "You're so maddeningly lovely—so little and dear—so unbelievably sweet. Oh, Judy, I have no right to touch you. Judy, kiss me."

She was in his arms, crushed against him, overwhelmed by the stormy tide of his kisses. For the first time in her life, she cast all barriers down, withholding nothing. The fiery passion of her kisses matched his, the flame mounted between them in an irresistible wave. When he released her mouth, she was trembling wildly, and Gene's breathing was ragged.

"We've drifted far apart, my darling," she panted. "I've been so terrified that I'd lose you. Oh, Gene, love me—just a little! I love you so terribly I can't—I can't—do without you. Gene, understand! I've never asked for anything, I've

never bothered you with my love. But I can't go on. You're in my very heart—can't you feel how it's beating your name over and over with every throb? Listen to it! Gene, Gene!"

She had, indeed, cast all barriers down. Her pride, the thousand hurts he had given her, the hours of her anguish, all lay like useless rubbish at her white feet. She had stripped her very soul bare before his gaze.

He pressed her hands hard over his burning eyes, crushed the perfumed palms against his mouth, bent his head to lay thirsty lips against that throbbing pulse in her white throat.

"Judy, Judy! Oh, I'm not fit to touch you," he stammered.

She gave herself more closely into his arms. "I belong to you," she whispered.

Then, with slow, lingering caress in every touch of body, hands, lips, she withdrew herself from his hold. He tried to keep her close to him.

"Don't go, my sweet Judy. Don't leave me now."

"I'll be in my room," she whispered, promise heavenly in her shining eyes. "I'll wait for you there." Slowly she crossed the thick carpet, slowly closed the dark, stately door between them.

She flew to her mirror, passed a powder puff across her cheeks and nose, and then hid her eyes from the radiant glory in her own face. Only one person on earth should see her when she looked so. She glanced swiftly toward the door which Gene would presently open. Blood sang in her temples. The scarlet sandal beat an impatient tattoo on the silky pale-gold carpet. Gene was very long in coming to her.

He did not come. He did not

come! The minute hand on the gold clock moved relentlessly, cruelly. Ten minutes—twenty—forty—more than an hour. An hour! And she had been so sure, so sickeningly sure. She dropped her face, drained long since of all its radiance and glory, into icy, rigid fingers. He had always felt the lure of her sweet body, even without love, and now, when her pride was torn in bleeding tatters, he had scorned even herself.

She could never afterward remember, through the torture of those endless moments, when she first knew, with a deathly certainty, that he did not mean to come. But when that certainty had frozen her heart to its numb depths, she ripped off the exquisite lace robe and coldly, deliberately tore it to shreds and tossed the shreds carelessly into the fire still burning in her white grate. She put on a long-sleeved black satin dressing gown that covered her from throat to toes, took off the scarlet sandals and threw them, too, into the fire. She stood watching them burn, her face expressionless as a mask.

When the blaze had died down to its former steady glow again, she rang for Feltrey.

"Has Mr. Gorham come in yet, Feltrey?" Her voice was colorless but even.

"He came in, madame, but left again, a little over an hour ago. Her highness, the Princess Frachini, telephoned. It seemed an urgent message, and Mr. Gorham went out at once. He has not yet returned,"

Feltrey said respectfully, curiosity lively behind his blank face.

"I see. Thank you." So Mavis had won again! This time, she had won the deciding battle, Judy thought frozenly.

"Would there be anything else, madame?"

Judy lifted quiet eyes. "That will be all, Feltrey. Good night."

He went out quietly.

Judy ran her hand through her hair, and was not aware that she had moved. But presently she went across the silky carpet to the white telephone by her bed. She sat down on the bed and dialed a number. Her hands were so numb she had difficulty turning the dial. But at last it was done.

She could hear the bell ring only once. A man's voice answered instantly. "Yes?"

Judy shut her eyes against that quiet voice. "I thought you might like to know to-night what I have decided, Ronnie." Even now, her voice held steady. She was past feeling.

"I've been sitting here by the telephone all evening, just waiting," Ronnie said simply.

That almost broke her. She caught her breath on an agonized thrust, but the pain mercifully quieted and left her numb again.

"I'm leaving for Reno in the morning. Will you come along and keep me amused"—her voice broke badly over that word, and she steadied it fiercely—"keep me amused while I break the tie that no longer binds?"

TO BE CONCLUDED.





Leading Lady

By B. Virginia Lee

JULIE put her other arm into the sleeve of her coat as she ran down the steps of the Muldrone Apartments. Her eyes were wide and frightened as she drew her coat together with gloveless hands, and tossed her tangled hair up out of her eyes with an upward motion of her head. She glanced swiftly up and down the avenue.

From the fifth floor of the apartment house a head leaned out the window and shouted: "Hey, Julie,

you can't do this to me. You little devil! I'm coming after you." The head disappeared. Julie looked anxiously up and down the avenue again.

Into the stillness of the early morning four chimes from a far-away clock broke indistinctly. There were no taxicabs in sight. It was three blocks to the nearest subway station. The street was deserted except for a limousine parked directly in front of the Muldrone, a

chauffeur waiting. This presented one possible chance of hiding until Roy, who most assuredly would come searching for her, might be avoided. Julie reached for the handle of the car door.

The chauffeur was out in an instant. He looked at her pointedly.

"I was told the car would be waiting," she said with her best voice, and hoped he would not question her. He raised his eyebrows and smiled, but he opened the door and Julie got in, while he resumed his seat to wait for whomever it was he was waiting for.

Julie closed her eyes and gave a little prayer of thanks. Anything she might get into was better than being in Roy Gerard's apartment. Of course, it had been foolish of her to come to Roy's at this time of night in the first place, but her success meant everything to her. She had nothing left to fill her life, since Warren Nye had walked so coldly out of it six months ago. Julie hadn't been able to admit in her heart the cruel things others said about Warren. Somehow, she couldn't make it all seem real.

She had tried to write a poem about it once when the dull ache in her heart threatened to become unbearable, but she had only written two lines. These she often repeated, they seemed so to fit the situation:

"You have gone as far from me as death,
Though I still live and you are not a
shade."

That was the pity of it, having to live on, knowing all the time that somewhere Warren was living and breathing, and that she would never again feel his arms about her, his cool lips upon hers, and hear his words of love that had come to her like rare music.

Julie knew that no girl should

have the least space in her heart reserved for a man who, encouraging her to a point where her entire life was bound up in him, had staged so thorough a running-out act, that no one had even heard of him since.

That was what had happened to Julie. Warren Nye had owned the show she was in and she was working only for success that might make him proud of her as his wife, and then—he had disappeared. The show folded. Well, she had been lucky to land a part in "Live A Day," just when it looked as if her money wouldn't hold out a week longer. And it was because some guy, as Roy Gerard put it, was going to buy the show, and if she'd come to his apartment that very night he'd get her in on the ground floor so she'd have a good part in it, that she had gone.

And now here she was, sitting in some one's car, waiting until it would be safe to make her escape. When Julie opened her eyes she shut them again quickly, then rubbed them hard, but when she opened them once more it was to look upon the broad shoulders of a tall young man, standing with his back to the car, facing the apartment house. She had not believed what she had seen the first time. His back! Could she ever be mistaken in that back? The way his dark hair showed below his hat, the curve of his neck! Could she be dreaming? Again she rubbed her eyes.

The young man was drawing on his gloves. The chauffeur's hand was on the handle of the door. Soon the door would be open and the young man would be getting in. Yet there was still the chance, she might be mistaken!

Then the man turned his head. Julie's heart did a nose dive. That face! There was no mistake now.

The man was none other than Warren Nye!

It was like seeing a ghost, a ghost of some one you had seen buried, definitely taken out of your life; a ghost who had the nerve to come back into your life and taunt you with the unpleasant reminder that when you were about to be the most happy person in the world, you were suddenly deserted. Yes, deserted, practically, without a word of explanation and left to straighten things out as best you could.

It had all turned out as the chorus girls said it would when they found out that Warren Nye was escorting her to and from the theater. That he was a man of the world they did not refrain from telling her, and each of them handed Julie a red danger flag, but little enough impression it made on her then. It was Warren Nye who made the impression, Warren who owned a penthouse with servants bowing to his every whim, with several cars at his command, with his manner of buying orchids, of serving champagne and promising the moon.

Then that night had come; the night after the opening of "The Goblin Will Get You." She would never forget it, though she must always remember it with tears in her heart. Every one had been so happy. There was no doubt but that the show would be a hit. Then Warren had come to her and placed the beautiful sparkling solitaire on her finger and said: "Well, you didn't watch out and the goblin has got you and he won't let you ever escape."

And she had wept, of all things.

"Darling, you shouldn't cry," he had whispered softly. "Doesn't it make you happy? Why, sweetheart, I'm so happy. I was afraid

you'd say 'No,' that I didn't have enough to offer, but now with the success of 'The Goblin Will Get You,' I can give you everything your heart desires."

"Oh, Warren!" she had sobbed and was in his arms, snuggled up in his protecting strength, his lips on hers, her lips responding, giving, loving. "Warren, they say you have loved so many girls. That you are careless and gay, that you fall in and out of love easily, scattering emotion and kisses freely; and if a heart breaks——"

He kissed the words from her lips. "What matter what they say, sweetheart?" He tilted her head up to him and smiled down into her eyes. "Will you believe me when I tell you there has never been any one else? Look at me, Julie, because it means everything to me that you believe me. I have money, a penthouse, a yacht, and no doubt, I have a trail of stories a mile long, but I tell you I've never wanted any one until I met you, and I've waited for weeks fearing you'd say 'No,' because I didn't have enough to offer. But to-night with the success of the show assured I had the courage to ask you to be my wife."

That was the worst of it, his telling her that, and then the next morning there was no trace of him. No word for her, not even a post card telling her it was all a joke. And now here he was, or had she been thinking of him so much that this man outside the car was only a manifestation of her own thoughts? No, the man was Warren Nye.

He couldn't see her in the car, huddled back in the seat. Her first impulse was to slide out the other side and run away, but her quick glance took in another man, a man who set fear and trembling into her.

He balanced drunkenly first on one foot and then the other. She could not hear what he was saying to Warren. Would he tell Warren she had been in his apartment with him, alone? And if he did, would Warren care? But apparently Roy did not mention her name, if he mentioned her at all, because he finally went on up the street.

The chauffeur turned the door handle and held the door open. Julie's heart did another flip-flop and stuck right in her throat. A little voice within her shouted: "You still love him. Don't be a fool and let him get away this time. You know you love him." That's what love did to you, separated you completely from reality, the reality that should have created vindictive hatred in her heart instead of this pounding and the little voice calling out so loudly to her.

She wondered if he heard that voice as he stepped inside the car and settled back on the cushions. She was grateful for the darkness, that he could not recognize her. A little time, just a little time, and maybe she would gain control of herself.

"And what," he wanted to know, without so much as glancing toward her as he settled back on the seat, "do I owe this to? I suppose you have mistaken my car; you have just escaped a dragon ready to swallow you up, or you are the starving sister of little *Nell*. Well, get this, I know them all, so you might as well get out right now, or shall I ask my man to call an officer?"

Julie was furious. Of course, he hadn't recognized her, but that made it all the worse, assuming that every girl was trying to frame him.

"I didn't mistake your car," she replied, hoping he wouldn't turn on

the lights. "And I'm not the starving sister of little *Nell*, but I have escaped a dragon. However, I find there is another worse than the one I escaped, one with seven fiery red tongues, capable of causing my complete dénouement!" She moved to get out. But at that moment Roy Gerard appeared within range of the car. Julie sank to the floor, trembling.

From between his teeth—and Julie imagined he was smiling the way he always did—he whispered: "I take it the seven-tongued dragon isn't such a menace after all." Then he spoke to the chauffeur, waved farewell to Roy, and the car moved slowly down the avenue.

After they had turned the corner he reached down and helped Julie to the seat beside him. "You may let me out now," she managed, thanking Heaven again that the darkness of the interior kept him from recognizing her. "Awfully decent of you to——"

"See here. I got you wrong," he said quickly. "Where do you want to go? No trouble at all. I am going right by your place, I assure you, wherever that may be."

"I've done enough escaping for one night," she answered back.

"Morning," he corrected and snapped on the light. "Better to see you with, my dear," he said, turning his eyes upon her.

"Julie!" There was surprise and joy in his voice.

Julie wanted to believe that it was love hunger she saw in his eyes as his arms went about her instantly, and she felt his mouth descending upon her own, and her own lips parted in a queer little gasp. But she reminded herself it didn't mean anything, and yet there was her heart pounding frantically



After the show Roy came to Julie and told her that if she'd come to his apartment that night, he thought he could get her a good part in a new show or even in this one. Julie hesitated a moment, then agreed to go.

against his when it ought to be stony cold.

"I can't believe it," he said thickly. "It's like a dream, I'm afraid I'll wake up and find you gone. You've been on my mind and

in my heart every minute for six months, every——"

"There are such things as letters if cables, telegrams and long-distance calls are too expensive," she interrupted.

"Don't talk like that. It isn't like you."

"I may have changed."

Julie felt his arms relax. He was staring at her. "Why were you at Roy Gerard's this time of morning?"

Julie laughed, but despite her laughter she was quivering with a strange nervousness. Was this jealousy?—she wondered. "I have a very good explanation," she told him, "but doesn't it seem rather unusual that you should assume you have an answer coming?"

When he found words to answer her she thought his voice trembled. "I know it looked as if that last night with you meant nothing to me; that I left heartlessly, without a thought for you."

"It didn't only look that way. It was that way," Julie told him.

"All right, maybe I was wrong, but I couldn't somehow make myself believe any one could care for me for myself alone. I couldn't seem to separate myself from the things that were so nearly a part of me—wealth, leisure, success—and I had promised you so much. I wanted to give you everything—everything that you were used to—orchids, champagne, limousines—everything you should have. And I thought that night that I had everything all tied up and on a silver platter. The next day I discovered that still more lightly than the sands of the desert is the fortune of man blown away. I had even signed my rights away to the show, in a mad orgy of speculation. Everything I possessed was wiped out. There wasn't any use making it worse by sticking around. I'd promised you so much and all I could have made good on then was a shack by a mountain stream. There wasn't any use getting in

touch with you—my love would not let me make you give up your luxuries."

"You thought I would be too great a responsibility, that's more like it." Julie had to say this, had to be cruel to keep herself from throwing herself into his arms with utter abandon.

The few moments, after he had discovered her there in his car, when they came back to each other across the many miles their parting had driven them, were over. Now they were drifting apart once more.

"Have it your way," he said finally, "but it doesn't change the fact that I love you. That I still worship you."

Julie felt the warmth of a tear race down her cheek, and her voice was barely more than a whisper. "Then why did you leave me?" she asked. "I was so happy that night I thought I'd die. You don't know it near all. From the first time I saw you—oh, it was long before you ever noticed me—I loved you. I dreamed of you. I was the one who did the worshiping. That's why I worked and slaved to make a success, so you'd finally discover I existed. I had to climb up into your world just to be near you, and the only way was by my stage career. I had to like orchids and limousines because your type of girl demanded them. Then the morning you did pick me out of the chorus, I thought no one could ever be so happy. Just to have you notice me was heaven. I would not listen when the girls told me it was just a passing fancy. No, I thought it was love." Julie bit her lips into submission, and began again:

"Then after the first night of 'The Goblin Will Get You,' when you gave me the ring and asked me to marry you, I was mad with joy.

In the morning I telephoned some of the girls in the chorus and told them you and I were engaged, that you really did love me, and it wasn't at all as they had said it would be. I had it all planned out, what I'd give the press as news. I had even thought of giving an announcement party, such as would please you."

Julie choked back a sob. No, she wouldn't cry. She wouldn't be caught again. Reviewing it all now sent a new stab into her heart, ripping wide open the old wound.

"Then I called your offices. You were not there. I called your home and was told you had gone away, that the house was to be closed. I called hotels, your club, but you were gone. As I sat there, not knowing what to do, Roy Gerard brought me the news that you had jumped the show, but that he was going to try to salvage it."

She was crying a little in spite of herself, and he was running his hand through her hair. "I had to do something, so I put my pride in my pocket, phoned the girls and told them I had only been kidding about you; tore up the items for the press, and after a long while I landed a part in 'Live A Day.' Every day I expected to hear from you. Then to-night Roy came to me after the show and told me that if I'd come to his apartment he thought he could get me a good part in a new show or even in this one, because some fellow was going to buy it and would be at Roy's apartment after the show."

"I'm back on my feet, now," Warren said eagerly. "I can give you everything now, just as I promised before."

"No," she said evenly. "I couldn't stand the same thing over again. Even if I did, it wouldn't erase the fact that you had left me

high and dry before. It would just prove me more of a fool than ever."

"You could tell them I just went away, that you were keeping a secret for me. That——"

"No, it would be like crying 'Wolf!' the second time. I don't want to try it."

Warren did not attempt to come in when his car stopped at the address Julie gave him. If there was sadness in each of their hearts, their pride respected her decision.

It was near seven in the morning that Julie's telephone became too insistent to ignore. As she said "Hello," the news which came to her made her heart sink.

"They've been calling 'extra' about it for the past hour. Must've happened near five o'clock. Warren is back in town, came back yesterday to buy 'Live A Day' with money he just got from a new play he's finished. He's going to star you in both. No one seems to know he ran into an 'El' post and wrecked his car. He'd dismissed his chauffeur and then gone out by himself. But he was conscious long enough to give the story to the papers. And dearie," the girl added. "I sure want to apologize to you about the way I laughed over Warren walking out on you. It takes a girl like you, just as he says in the interview, to keep a secret. There would have been a pack of reporters on his heel, and he'd never have finished the play that——" Julie hung up.

Through her heart went the terrifying knowledge that Warren had met with an accident, that even then he was in the hospital. And had given that story to the press to save her humiliation!

Ten minutes later Julie was looking down at Warren, unconscious

and swathed in bandages. Looking down at his still form, so white, he who had been begging her so short a time before to forgive him; telling her of his love, telling her he had come back when he had wealth and ease to offer her. If she had only said "Yes," this terrible thing would not have happened. If she hadn't said that awful thing about no one believing her again. Why, he had stayed conscious long enough to make a statement to the press, setting her right with the world.

"Oh, dear God, let him live. It was all my fault. I love him so. I'll live the rest of my life for him," Julie sobbed, under her breath, then she turned to the doctor. "If he gets well," she repeated aloud, "I'll spend the rest of my life, pleasing him." There, she had a witness to her promise, and she felt better. No matter what happened now, she would stick by it.

"I can't tell how serious his condition is until after we take X rays. But I warn you to be prepared," the doctor told her, as he led her out of the room.

It seemed hours to Julie that she waited in that reception room, hours while doctors were probing with instruments, taking X rays. If he should die she would be to blame, and she hadn't really wanted to hurt him.

Back and forth across the room she paced. "If he lives," she told herself again and again, "I'll do everything for him. I can't go on without him."

Finally a nurse came and told her to follow. Julie wondered, at each step, if she'd be able to reach the end of the corridor. She felt as if she were a shadow of herself, following the nurse down to a room where she would be told whether Warren would live or die!

The door opened. The nurse stood back, while Julie was permitted to enter. There was Warren. His head was bandaged, his arm was bandaged, most everything about him was bandaged except his smile, and that most certainly was in working order.

"The doctor just showed me the extra. They got everything in all right. Guess that explained things, darling?"

Julie didn't say anything. She stood with her back to the wall, drained of color, drained of life almost, drained of everything but the supreme knowledge in a woman's mind. He was here. He was smiling. He wasn't going to die. She could see him. She could hear him talk! And the next instant she was touching him, and the most astonishing thing was that he was using his bandaged arm!

"Oh, Warren," she sobbed, "I didn't mean what I said. I don't know what I'd have done without you. I don't know how I got along without you——"

Warren was kissing the very words from her lips. "If they'd take these bandages off my arm I'd carry you right over to the Marriage License Bureau to make sure." And then he was grinning again, out of the corners of his mouth.

"I'll tell you what, we'll have the Marriage License Bureau moved over here," he decided suddenly. "Bedside wedding." And before she could say "Yes" or "No," he had given his orders to the doctor and they were alone once more.

He pulled her close to him again. "How about another kiss before they get back with the Marriage License Bureau, sweet?" With a sigh Julie offered him her lips, and they clung to each other in an endless kiss.



Wedding Ring

By Pauline Brooks

BETSEY CLINTON stood on the promenade deck of the big liner and watched the fade-out of the Battery sky line. Then she grinned with impish delight at the fourth finger of her left hand—the platinum circle with its deep-set diamonds that loomed white and glistening against the smooth brown of her hand. Could a wedding ring obtrude itself more delicately yet definitely upon the public eye?

A few minutes later, in her state-

room, she studied the passenger list with eager brown eyes. Not a name she knew, thank the gods! And there was hers—Mrs. Richard van Dusen. Betsey laughed, and her laughter held the essence of sunlight that sparkled on the water and shone through the open windows of her cabin.

For the first time in her twenty-two years, she was traveling alone—freedom plus security, thanks to a wedding ring. And better still, was

the titillating prospect of being desired as the ever delectable forbidden fruit that hangs from the tree of life. Didn't attractive young married women always have oodles of eligible men trailing after them? Unmarried girls could never compete with them.

It had worked out conveniently—her semi-orphan state—due to having two sets of parents, each going off on a brand-new honeymoon. Under normal domestic conditions she could never have escaped. And how easy it had been to pass as Dick van Dusen's wife in getting her passport, the only requisite being the moral and legal support of his birth certificate, purchasable for the price of one dollar and a bit of natal data. Queer law that—permitting any one to buy any one else's birth certificate!

She and Dick had been born on the same day and in the same block, of parents who were intimate friends. What a huge joke it had been to Dick's kid sister Marion to act as the one witness required by the passport authorities! Marion could be trusted to keep the secret—at least, until Dick returned from Africa. And of course he would appreciate the joke. In fact, he would tell her to borrow his name indefinitely, for he had once said that he would never marry until he was too old for adventure.

Betsey dressed for dinner, then stood a minute looking at her left hand. Suddenly, she lifted it and lightly kissed the wedding ring. How exciting to enjoy the privileges of the married state, with none of its drawbacks! She rather pitied the widows and divorcees whose emancipation must have been dearly bought.

She was ushered to a table for four at which were already seated

two young men in dinner clothes and a girl with a professional Southern drawl. As the men introduced themselves, Betsey took swift inventory of their assets—Price Guernsey, aquiline, dark and debonair; Stanton West, features strong and irregular, with an infrequent smile that lingered in his dark-blue eyes longer than on his wide and rather stern mouth. She had never seen such thick tawny hair on a man's head.

During dinner, the other three returned her impersonal smiles and limited their conversation to the amenities of pepper and salt. But later in the evening, Guernsey asked her to dance. His technique was not original but it diverted Betsey, for it eliminated every woman except herself. His possessive manner conveyed the impression that they were old friends, and it held off other men.

Stanton West stood on the side lines, watching her. When their eyes met, his face remained impassive. The orchestra played a tango, and Betsey and her partner suddenly found themselves in sole possession of the dance space.

"Shall we keep on?" Guernsey whispered in her ear.

"Why not?" She moved her face a half inch and smiled at him.

"They're probably thinking we're dancing partners on some hotel roof."

"That's better than taking me for a cabaret hostess and you for a gigolo." Her mischievous eyes laughed into his.

"Maybe that's what I am. How do you know?" His laugh was as well-bred as his voice.

"I've often wished I were old and fat enough to dance with a gigolo. Poor things! They never get a chance at girls, and they do dance

divinely. Just like you," she added teasingly.

"In Chicago I could get you a job in our swankiest cabaret."

"Oh, so you're from Chicago. I wonder why passenger lists never give anything but names."

"And prefixes. That's where women are at a disadvantage. That Mrs. before your name tells its own story, Mrs. van Dusen."

"Only part of it." She gave him a bright smile and drew out of his arms as the music stopped.

"Divorced or widowed?" he asked lightly. His hand on her arm was as light as his tone.

"Neither," she said, as they sauntered off.

They pushed through the circle of onlookers and passed close to West. She gave him a frank and comradely smile. With a quickening of her pulse, she saw the dull-red mount to the edge of his blond hair. Then he frowned and turned abruptly on his heel.

"Well! Did you see that?" Betsey felt a vague sense of injury.

"That chap kept staring at you while we were dancing, and now he glares when you smile at him. Sweetness wasted on the desert air."

"I suppose one might call the ocean a desert. Anyway, I'm horribly thirsty, aren't you?"

"Horribly! But the bar'll be crowded. How about some drinks sent to my suite? I've got my own veranda, you know."

"So!" She smiled provocatively. "You're not only from Chicago but you're a son of a bank president. Nobody else has money nowadays."

"Stupid of me!" His laugh was apologetic. "I didn't mean to pull the eagle's tail till it squealed. As a matter of fact, those suites aren't expensive this time of year."

They had walked to the deck rail

and were leaning on it, looking down into the black waters, their elbows touching.

"But you are a bank president's son?" She grinned up at him.

"He's only a vice president. And how about that drink on my private veranda?"

"Let's sit outside the main bar. I'm being very democratic these days, Mr. Guernsey."

"You're being very conventional." His laugh mocked her amiably.

They sat just outside the bar and sipped long cool drinks. Betsey found herself watching for West's tall, spare figure. The odd challenge in his eyes haunted her. Why had he stared if he disliked her?—she wondered. Guernsey was saying casually:

"You didn't like my asking if you were widowed or divorced?"

"I answered you. I haven't either a late-lamented or divorced husband." Betsey giggled, delighted at the neat way she had turned the phrase. It was amusing to lie truthfully.

"Just taking a little vacation from matrimony?" Guernsey leaned closer to her.

"Dick," she said coolly, "has been big-game hunting in Africa. I expect to meet him in Paris in a few weeks."

"May I hope that you're not pining away without him?"

She stirred in her chair, bringing her face a trifle nearer to his. "Nothing like that." The flash in her eyes might have meant anything from humor to allure. His hand covered hers where it lay on the arm of her chair, then he lifted it and touched the wedding ring with the tip of his finger.

"I've always been afraid of these little gadgets—no-beginning-no-end sort of thing, you know." He

twisted the ring around on her finger.

"There's got to be a beginning and there's usually an end to marriage. Wedding rings are merely symbols of something our ancestors believed in." There was irony in Betsey's laugh, remembering the parental brand-new honeymoons.

"You're pretty cynical for one so young." Guerny gave her fingers a tentative squeeze. "Is that what marriage has done for you?"

"Not my marriage," she said. Then she drew away her hand and swung her feet off her deck chair. "It's awfully late. I'm going below. Happy dreams, Mr. Chicago-bank-vice-president's son!" Before he could catch up with her, she had disappeared down a corridor.

Betsey's first glance over the sports deck next morning, discovered Price Guerny flirting with a little blond thing in slacks. He lost scarcely a minute in his evolution to Betsey, in demure shorts. Her second glance met Stanton West's serious eyes, and from the rail where he stood, he approached her. She had time to wonder at his friendliness, and then he stood before her, saying eagerly:

"Is your husband Dick van Dusen of Yale, '29?"

"Oh! Do you know Dick?" She beamed at him.

"We were classmates and friends. But I haven't heard from him for three years."

Guerny did not fancy himself as audience for a beguiling girl and another man who was certainly pleasing to the eye. He said:

"I'll have to dig up a mutual friend. I feel like a stepchild."

West ignored Guerny. "I hadn't heard that Dick was married. When

I read the passenger list I wondered if you were his wife."

"Awfully nice, our crossing on the same boat," she evaded lightly. Then a sudden illusive recollection sprang into her mind. "I remember hearing Dick speak of you, Mr. West—raved about a college friend who was doing something or other very interesting. What do you do?"

"What did Dick tell you?" he parried lightly.

"That's the part I've forgotten." She frowned, trying to jog her memory. "But I remember the name perfectly."

"How long have you and Dick been married?" he asked her bluntly.

Ye gods, but the man was persistent! And there was something disturbing in his intent expression. Her laugh was careless as she said:

"Just long enough for Dick to go to Africa after big game. Can you gauge the length of a man's marriage by that, Mr. West?"

"I think it would depend on how much his wife loved him."

"I adore the way you put it." She stared at him, amused. "Most men would have said that it depended on how much the man loved his wife. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Guerny?" She turned to him, smiling.

"How could such a question be raised in your case?" Guerny was certainly prompt and pat.

"You're both so gallant, I'm overwhelmed. Come on, let's play deck tennis."

And so, the stage was set for an exhilarating voyage. That evening West danced with her. He was the first man who had ever made her feel as if she were dancing alone in space—on a cloud perhaps—and yet whose touch quickened her pulse.

They found chairs in the lee of a

lifeboat. Betsey tried to talk as she had always talked to men—gayly, provocatively. But thought and emotion became part of the night, of the heaving, vast waters, the sky above them, and the man sitting beside her in the darkness.

His silence made her tremble. It seemed to be telling her so many things that no one had ever told her before. She knew that he was watching her, and when he spoke, his question did not startle her because she had known he would ask it. She had expected it.

"Are you in love with Dick?" he asked quietly.

She had a wild desire to laugh. Exactly twenty-four hours ago, Guernsey had put the same question in a different form.

"Do I seem like the sort of girl who'd marry a man without being in love with him?" She spoke nonchalantly, looking straight into his earnest eyes.

"You're clever at parrying questions, aren't you?"

"I might say you're good at asking them." Her smile took the edge from her comment. "And I might add that people can be madly in love when they marry and out of it later on."

"I didn't think you and Dick had been married long enough for that. That's another question you sidestepped this morning. I can only guess that you were married two or three years ago."

Her smile widened. "A miss is as good as a mile when it comes to guessing. But, frankly, I'm very fond of Dick. Really! Have been ever since we were small kids."

"Fond of him?" There was a ring

of scorn in West's voice. "Poor devil!"

This time she could not stifle her laughter—nervous laughter—and frowning, he turned from her to stare at the expanse of ocean. Impulsively, she put her hand on his arm. It was a very light touch, yet she felt the quiver of his flesh under her hand. She said contritely:

"You mustn't mind my laughing. I just thought of something—nothing to do with you." Her voice was low and caressing.

His head turned slowly until their faces were very close. She had a mad urge to tell him that she had never even imagined herself in love before. Then suddenly their lips touched—it was that at first—a touch; fragile as a lightly drawn breath. But each felt the swift

tempo of the other's heartbeat, and a strange tingling of nerves and flesh that was like ice and fire, sleep and waking, stillness and motion.

Once again they kissed, and now it was as if a resistless tide were carrying them into unknown space with a joy that left them numb. All her life Betsey would relive in memory the exquisite shock of that kiss. It left her quiet and serene in her soul, yet her body trembled.

Then she saw his face gradually stiffen, and with a violent jerk that brought from her a low cry, he was on his feet, staring down at her. His face was stony, but his eyes were alive.

"This must never happen again—never!"

She got out of her chair quickly, and stood looking at him.

"Why mustn't it?"



There was scorn and reproach in his eyes as he bent over her.

"Don't you know without my telling you?"

She struggled against the sense of guilt implied by the rising inflection of his voice.

"I suppose you mean that old credo about the wife of your best friend?" A faint defiance had come to her rescue.

"No, I don't!" he said brusquely. "I don't care whose wife you happen to be. You've got a husband—that's what I mean."

"But, you see," her voice quavered in her struggle with laughter—"there's something that I must explain—something to tell you," she stumbled awkwardly.

"Please don't!" His voice was like a knife cutting the situation in two.

Out of the vortex of her thoughts came a decision. Why confide in a man she had met twenty-four hours before, merely because his kisses had affected her indescribably? A kiss, however disturbing, committed a man to nothing beyond the emotion of the moment. He had not said that he loved her. What an idiot she would be to magnify the circumstances.

"I'm going below," she said softly. "Good night."

She lifted her face to his, and his expression baffled her. She ran from him along the deck and disappeared down a companionway.

As she lay in the darkness of her cabin, rolling a little with the movement of the ship, suddenly she recalled what Dick had said about his friend, Stanton West. He had gone into the diplomatic service and was making a brilliant record—an unusual one for a man in his early thirties.

For what post, she wondered, was he now bound? Nothing would in-

duce her to ask him, and he seemed disinclined to talk about himself. She longed to tell him the truth about her wedding ring, but why tell him anything if he didn't feel what his kisses had conveyed? Her young sophistication stopped short at understanding the fact that a man's sense of honor becomes exacting in proportion to his sense of guilt. Guilt, in this case, meant loving his friend's wife.

From that night Stanton avoided her pointedly, and a pain grew in her heart that made food tasteless and sleeping a procession of tormenting dreams. Perhaps it was because of this that she threw herself into a hectic flirtation with Guernsey. They shared their daytime activities, and by night they danced and drank and danced again, then sat in some secluded corner until sailors came to wash down the decks.

The night before they reached Naples, deck hands appeared earlier than usual to wash down the decks. It was a night of semitropic warmth, with a moon that made sport of dark corners and secretive couples. In fact, Guernsey had to curb his ardor, and he was in no mood for restraint. He said abruptly:

"Be a sport, darling, and come down to my suite. It's much too early to turn in, and this is our last night on board."

"Your last night." Her smile tormented him. "I'll have one more before we reach Villefranche Harbor."

"I meant, our last night together."

"How tragically final." She laughed.

"It might be at that. But not if it's up to me. I'm due in Rome tomorrow night, then on to Paris for

a few days. But I'll be running down to Nice in about ten days."

"I might have left there by then, and you might not find me."

"You'll still be there, and I could always find you through our consul or the French police," he added with a laugh.

"I give up." She made a gesture of mock despair. "I can see that you'll find me if you want to, which you mightn't, after two weeks."

"Don't bank on that, darling." They heard the approaching swish of water, and he put his hand on her arm. "Here come the hose pests. Shall we go to my suite or to yours, Betsey?" His calm assumption that it would be one or the other, made her smile. After all, why not?

"All right, I'll go to yours," she said indifferently, and got out of her chair.

"Fine!" He seized her arm eagerly as they walked to the nearest companionway.

Champagne and sandwiches were brought, and while they drank and ate, they smoked, chatted and laughed, the intimacy of the setting and the hour gradually breaking down intangible barriers. She let him kiss her, and his kisses grew more ardent and more encroaching. He was an attractive man physically, and her fastidious recoil from his love-making was of the spirit rather than of the body, because that part of her was with another man.

Guerney was too experienced to be crude, but wine and an extremely lovely young woman fired his senses and made him bold. There came the inevitable moment when he forgot finesse. She struggled in his embrace, gently at first, then fiercely. It all ended as suddenly as it started. He let go of her so unexpectedly that she lost her balance.

Then they stood and glared at each other. He was quite as angry as she was. True to sex tradition, Betsey spoke first.

"I might have known what to expect!"

"Obviously." His voice expressed more scorn than anger.

"What do you mean by that?" she flashed at him.

"Are you going naïve at this stage of the game?"

He lighted a cigarette with cool deliberation, but his hands trembled, and he continued to glare at her.

"You mean, if a girl consents to be alone with you in your room, you assume that she——" Betsey halted, nervous and uncomfortable.

"Not a girl," Guerney contradicted quickly. "I don't care how sophisticated an unmarried girl seems to be, a man's got to watch his step. But a married woman knows just where she gets on and off. And so does the man, unless he's a fool."

"Oh, I see," she drawled, her eyes wide with speculation. "A married woman is fair game, because the man—no matter what might happen—wouldn't have to marry her."

"Don't be so literal," he said irritably.

Betsey broke into sudden uncontrollable laughter. She dropped into the nearest chair and looked up at him out of eyes that held only a vast amusement and no rancor. He thought that she was hysterical, and he shook her arm a little roughly.

"Snap out of it, Betsey!"

"But you don't understand." She tried to stop laughing and to speak clearly. "I'm not hysterical, really. But it's all so terribly funny, and you don't know why."

Guerney was annoyed and puzzled. "I see neither humor nor mystery in the way you've acted. I sup-



His kisses grew more ardent and more encroaching. Guerney was too experienced to be crude, but wine and an extremely lovely young woman fired his senses and made him bold. Suddenly she struggled fiercely in his embrace.

pose it's because you're so in love with your husband, that you can't stand another man touching you."

She got to her feet and looked at him appraisingly. She was familiar with his code now. She was fair

game because of a mythical husband. Wasn't it precisely the status she had desired? Why should she resent it? But it was funny—the difference between Guernsey's code and Stanton's.

"I'm sorry," she said quietly. "You had a perfect right to think what you did. But really, I didn't intend to lead you on, Price—I mean, to such a point. And I like you, really I do. Let's part friends, if you'll forgive me?" She took a step toward him, her hand extended.

"You're a brick!" He met her frankness and good-fellowship half way. "I'm the one to ask forgiveness." He lifted her hand to his lips, then held it for a few seconds between both of his. "I'm going to see you again, my dear girl, and soon. Now that we understand each other, we'll have great times together, won't we?"

"Are you hoping to reform me?" she teased him.

"What have you left me but hope?" he countered with a laugh.

She had a brief encounter with Stanton a few minutes before the passengers for Naples left the steamer. She was standing alone by the rail, looking down at the small craft bobbing about on the bay, and thinking bitterly of the joke she had played on herself. She heard his voice close behind her.

"Will you say good-by to me, Mrs. van Dusen?"

She swung around and looked at him. She noted the strained expression in his eyes and the tired lines about his mouth, or did she imagine it? Her heart was thumping and she had a wild desire to throw her arms around him. But this sternly moral young man had shown no sign of loving her. With a bright smile she held out her hand.

"Why good-by?" she said lightly. "*A rivederci*, since we're off the coast of Italy. I can say that in four languages, can you? *Auf wiedersehen* is beautiful, but I like *adieu* best."

"The French never bid any one *adieu* unless they're going away forever. So we'll say *au revoir*." His grasp of her hand hurt a little. "If I run into Dick in Paris I'll tell him how much I enjoyed meeting you on this trip."

"No, don't!" she said, drawing away her hand.

"I think you said you were going to join Dick in Paris?"

"I don't know how long I'll stay on the Riviera. Any chance of your dropping down that way?" She turned the tables so unexpectedly, that he fumbled his reply.

"I've no plans—I mean—no legitimate reason for going down there."

There was an ache in her heart, but she forced a gay smile.

"You always have to have everything frightfully legitimate, don't you?" Before he could speak, she added: "I'm going to the Hotel Welcome. It's as quaint as its name, sitting right down on the shore of Villefranche Harbor. Did you ever go there?"

"No," he said, looking steadily into her eyes.

"Well, you should, before you die." She strove for the light touch that would conceal her thoughts. "By the way, I haven't had a chance to mention it but I remembered, the night you kissed me, what Dick said you were. Are you on leave, or bound for some embassy or legation?"

She saw his face redden at her casual mention of his kissing her, but the blood ebbed and left his face pale. He said quietly:

"I have three more weeks of leave, then I'm going to Cairo."

"Cairo! How romantic! It's so exciting our having a legation there now. I imagine you're first secretary?"

He bowed with light irony. "Not that it matters, but you imagine correctly."

"I've always wanted to go to Egypt." Betsey stared out over the bay, and her voice sounded wistful.

He moved suddenly closer to her, but he drew back stiffly as she turned her face to his. He threw a look over his shoulder at the ship's ladder, and said tensely:

"I may never see you again but I'll never forget you!" He was gone before she could move or speak.

Guerney came hurrying to her, his face red with annoyance.

"That fool steward! I've just found my baggage in the stateroom of a fellow who's not getting off at Naples. I wanted to spend this last half hour with you, Betsey."

"Too bad! You'll have to hurry or you'll miss the tender."

"Try to remember me for ten days, darling." He squeezed her hand. "And don't hide away from me in some stupid *pension*."

"You are conceited," she laughed at him. "Do you think I'd bother to hide anywhere on your account?"

"If you put it that way, decidedly no. Well, *au revoir*, Betsey." He gave her shoulder a quick pressure and hurried off.

She walked down the deck, out of sight of the tender and of Naples glistening in the distance. Off to the left was Capri. She wished that she might go there some day with Stanton—silly wish! If only she could laugh at the irony of the situation. One man would not make love to her because he believed her to be married, and the other man re-

garded the sky as his limit for the very same reason.

Two weeks at the Hotel Welcome, or rather at all the beaches from Cap Ferrat to Cannes, tanned her as smoothly brown as a ripe olive. Sailing, motoring, dancing at Maximes, the men flocked about her, while the women fumed.

It was off season and she took a long chance on running into old friends. Flirting was as much a part of the thing-to-do as drinking. But Betsey was not in the mood for it, and as the days passed, she grew restless and unhappy.

One morning she rowed herself back from Cap Ferrat, beached her rented boat, and ran up the cobbled road to the hotel. She wore beach pajamas over her bathing suit, and her tousled hair shone like copper in the sunlight. She radiated youth and health, and the men who sat drinking on the lower terrace stared at her with bold admiration.

But she scarcely noticed them, for she was looking at a gray touring car parked opposite the hotel down by the water front. Idly curious, she ran up the outside steps and into the hotel from the upper terrace.

In her room she found her bill for two weeks. She whistled at the long list of extras, and decided to check on them in the future. She would imply as much to the proprietor and pay the bill at once.

Her travelers' checks were bound in a leather folder which she kept in her hand bag. She dug into every compartment of the bag. It simply wasn't there. She ransacked bureau drawers, bags and her wardrobe trunk, but futilely.

Lost or stolen, it would take at least two weeks to get duplicates of the checks. To cable home for money would involve the use of her



"Darling, do be reasonable. I can't ask you to marry me because another man did that. But do you really care so much for that husband of yours that you wouldn't consider taking a little trip with me?"

own name and start inquiries regarding her passport. She could explain to the proprietor, but it would be embarrassing to go around without a cent. Maybe the American consul at Nice would advance her a

little money. Well, no use worrying about it!

She dressed, went down to the upper terrace and sat at one of the small iron tables. Before she could give a waiter her order, Price Guer-

ney strode out from the hotel and went to her with both hands outstretched. She was glad to see him and said so. He sat down, ordered drinks, then put his hand over hers on the table.

"Good as my word, wasn't I, Betsey? I had a hunch you'd come to this hotel." His eyes were predatory. "You're more beautiful than ever, darling."

"Just the glamour of the azure coast." She smiled and wondered if he would lend her fifty dollars—without any string attached.

"Have you missed me?" His complacent smile took her answer for granted.

"Terribly!" He frowned at her mockery, and she added with more sincerity: "Really I have, Price. I've met men and men, but you seem like an old friend."

"That's better." He gave her hand a quick squeeze. "I hope you'll treat me like one."

"Maybe I will. I might as well begin right now. I've lost my travelers' checks or they've been stolen, and I can't pay my hotel bill. I've got exactly three dollars and thirty cents in change. I'm simply furious!"

"That is a nuisance, but nothing to worry about. I'll settle your bill, darling—I mean—give you whatever you need."

"Lend me, not give me, Price." Her steady eyes held his.

"Of course!" His agreement was facile, but his eyes mocked her humorously.

Good heavens! Was he fool enough to think that maybe she hadn't lost her checks, that she had none to lose, that she was an adventuress waiting around for men to pay her expenses? Of course he wasn't. He hadn't intended to sound so crude. And why not ac-

cept his loan and his devotion? She could use both for the time being. So she smiled and raised her glass.

"Here's to friends in need? May their number never grow less!"

They clinked glasses and smiled over the rims. Then he said:

"Darling, do be reasonable. I can't ask you to marry me because another man did that—worse luck for me. But do you really care so much for that husband of yours that you wouldn't consider taking a little trip with me, off the beaten track where we won't run into mutual acquaintances?"

She hesitated, biting her lips. He was certainly laying plans to attach a very strong string indeed to his offer of assistance. But why be prudish and disdainful? Better to laugh it off.

"I was right when I asked you on shipboard if you hoped to reform me the next time we met." She laughed good-naturedly. "Let's have another drink. To the foolish married maidens who won't be reformed."

He called the waiter, and she glanced over his shoulder at the cobbled roadway below the terrace. Then she sprang to her feet, upsetting the iron-wrought chair, and ran to the railing that overhung the road.

A roadster had stopped some yards away, and a man was getting out of the car. She had forgotten Guernsey until she heard him, close beside her. His voice rang with annoyance.

"I'll be hanged if that isn't the fellow who was on the boat—what was his name?—West, something or other!"

She didn't bother to answer Guernsey. Her eyes dilated as she watched Stanton walk toward the hotel. So he had come! But why,

unless he loved her better than scruples about married women in general, and the wife of his friend in particular?

At that instant, he lifted his head and saw her. And he was smiling—a smile that quickened his features and lingered in his eyes. Betsey ran to the terrace steps and down them at reckless speed. She must tell him the truth quickly, before he should have time to regret coming to find her.

The next few seconds were confused, yet clear as daylight. She went running to meet him, her hands held out to him, and he seized them, holding them tight as he bent his head to hers. She poured out her confession in short gasps of excitement. She ended with a tremulous smile.

"So you see, I'm not anybody's wife! Dick was just my borrowed husband. And I knew he wouldn't mind, having no wife of his own."

"But he has!" Stanton's low laugh sounded triumphant.

Betsey stepped back from him, her eyes widening in amazement. He drew her close to him and said eagerly:

"My darling! I'm glad you told me everything of your own accord. I so wanted you to, before I told you my story."

He had run into Dick in Paris, and had spoken of crossing over with

Dick's wife. Dick had roared his amusement and introduced Stanton to a pretty girl standing near by with a group of friends. The pretty girl was his wife, Dick had said, whom he had married a few weeks before, and who had not been back to the United States for two years, so of course Stanton could not have crossed over on the same ship with her.

"It all left me a trifle light-headed, as you can imagine," he concluded. "I laughed off my error, made my escape, and motored right down here."

"Didn't you wonder about me—what I was up to?" Betsey asked him, mischief contending with emotion in her eyes.

"Obviously, I couldn't figure out all the details. All I knew and all that mattered was that you weren't Dick's wife, nor any other man's wife."

"Not yet," she said, raising her face closer to his.

Regardless of Guernsey glaring down at them from the terrace, or of other peering eyes, Stanton kissed her and whispered:

"My darling, do you still want to go to Egypt?"

"To the ends of the world with you, dearest!" And oblivious of all else, Betsey threw her arms around his neck.





A Bad Penny

By Mary Irwin

MY darling girl," young Doctor Dixon said as Inez Compton entered the sanctuary of his inner office, "I was afraid you might not come back to-day." He smiled eagerly as he took her in his arms and kissed her.

"Oh!" she gasped when he released her, "you shouldn't do that!" But Inez knew that she did not mean it. The doctor's kiss was the most exquisitely beautiful thing she had ever known. It had been love at first sight when she had come

here yesterday with a headache. Was it only yesterday? It seemed like an eternity from Thursday afternoon until this afternoon. But at last, thank goodness, she was here. And what a struggle it had been getting away from her mother and the inevitable Freddy! Inez sighed with relief as she sank down on the deep-cushioned divan.

"Why shouldn't I kiss you?" Perry Dixon was asking. "You're the loveliest thing I've seen to-day—or any other day." He smiled

again and Inez thought that he was the most charming man she had ever met. His hair was jet-black, his eyes sparkled merrily.

"I'm mad about you," Perry Dixon said in a low throbbing tone. He lifted her slender white hand with the lovely diamonds on it and kissed it tenderly. Inez noticed his frown at her engagement ring and withdrew her hand. She had forgotten the ring. She wished she hadn't worn it.

"I've paced the floor and smoked a thousand cigarettes," Perry Dixon said. "One minute I was sure you wouldn't come, and the next minute I knew you would." He was sitting at his desk now, his immaculate hands unconsciously toying with a pair of surgical scissors.

"I had a terrible time slipping away," Inez said. "I had to wait until mother was out of the way and then Freddy, of course, had to be in the lobby." She sighed. "I finally dodged him, however, too."

Inez was taking in the exotic atmosphere of the room. Yes, it was exactly as she had remembered it—less like an office than a den. It intrigued her. The heavy embroidered velvet drapes made the floor lamp a necessity and gave the room an air of mystery. There were books and pictures; there was, above all, an air of romance. Inez was certain that no other man she had ever known could have created this room, this atmosphere.

"I'm wondering," the doctor said curiously, "just who Freddy is. You mentioned him before."

"Freddy?" Inez flushed. It was going to be difficult to explain Freddy. "Why, Freddy Cranston," she said, embarrassed, "is my—my fiancé. You see, my mother wants me to marry him. He's terribly wealthy. Not that mother is mar-

rying us for his money, she explained quickly. "I—well, we have enough money without——"

The doctor nodded. "Yes, I see that," he said as his glance took in her smart swagger suit, her expensive furs.

"Well, mother likes Freddy," Inez finished lamely.

"And you don't." Perry Dixon grinned teasingly.

"In a way," Inez answered frankly. "But not—not as I like you," she said coyly.

"And not, I hope, as I like you"—Perry's demanding eyes consuming the distance between them.

"I can't stay long," Inez said uneasily. Her words brought the doctor to her side.

"Let's not waste any time then," he said, taking in the dainty freshness of her face, her fragile yet glowing beauty. Inez looked at him provocatively from under heavy lashes. She knew he was mad about her, and she was no less so about him.

"You're the sweetest little girl I've ever known," he murmured as he kissed her hair and eyes. Inez held her breath in sheer ecstasy. Impulsively, she pressed her flushed face against his smooth-shaven cheek. How could she, she asked herself fiercely, marry Freddy Cranston after meeting this fascinating, breath-taking man?

"When am I going to be alone with you?" Perry asked. "I mean really alone, and when you don't have to hurry."

"Soon, I hope," Inez answered dreamily. At that moment, the only thing that mattered was to be able to give herself up to the ecstasy of Perry's arms about her, his lips on hers in long, endless kisses.

"It must be soon," he said impatiently, almost brusquely. Inez saw that he was a man who was

used to having his demands granted. The thought frightened her and she shivered involuntarily.

"Love like ours won't wait," Perry continued. "And love like ours is the greatest thing life has to offer." How beautifully he expressed her own thoughts! Freddy had never said anything so romantic as that.

"If only I were free," Inez said petulantly. "I'm tied to mother's apron strings. She expects to be told every place I go."

"You must be free," Perry said quickly. "Slip away and go out to the lake with me to-night. I have a house boat anchored there and we'll be quite alone. No one can find us."

Inez was shocked. As much as she wanted to go, the thought was too daring. "I couldn't do that," she whispered. "Suppose some one should find out?"

"They couldn't possibly. I tell you, it's perfectly safe. I love you so, Inez. Say you will, my sweet." His passionate dark eyes pleaded with her while he waited for her answer.

"I don't know. How could I arrange it?" she wavered.

"I'll meet you in my car at the south entrance to your hotel. At seven," he added, as if he had it all planned. Inez was still undecided and Perry, seeing it, said: "Only a few hours together—alone—away from the world. I'll bring you safely back. You trust me?" he asked in a hurt tone.

Inez laughed. "Of course, I trust you. All right. Somehow, I'll meet you." She glanced at her watch and caught her breath sharply as she rose. "I must run!"

"I couldn't let you go," Perry said as he held her against him, "if I weren't going to see you this eve-

ning. Promise, sweet, that you'll be there." He kissed her and Inez couldn't speak for a full minute.

"At seven," she said, breathless, when he let her go.

Then the doctor bowed suavely as he opened the door.

Inez was glad, as she was whisked down in the elevator, that her mother liked Mineral Springs. For if they had returned to New York the week before as Inez had begged her to, she would not have met Perry Dixon. Inez was glad, too, that she had had a headache yesterday and had happened onto Perry Dixon's name downstairs.

Then she thought of Freddy again, and the thought made her unhappy. Mrs. Compton had insisted on asking Freddy along with them to Mineral Springs. And, of course, Freddy had been anxious to come. If she was going to be forced into marrying Freddy Cranston's millions, as the handwriting on the wall seemed to indicate, then Inez saw no reason for having him continually under her nose weeks before the dreaded wedding. But her mother's idea of heaven seemed to be to bask in the warm sunshine of Mineral Springs and breakfast, lunch, and dine with Freddy.

Darn! Inez thought as she walked out the Thurman Building. The familiar young man who stood so nonchalantly at the entrance brought the quick color to her face.

"Freddy!" Inez stormed as she stopped and looked at him angrily. "You—you follow me?"

"No, just waiting on you," the tall blond young man smiled amiably. "I saw you leave the hotel and thought I could catch you, but you walked too fast. Then you disappeared into this building. So I just hung around."

"You're like a bad penny," Inez

raged as she walked swiftly up the street, setting a fast pace for the easy-going Freddy Cranston. "Alway turning up at the wrong time."

"Inez, what's the matter?" Freddy asked good-naturedly, trying to keep up with her. "You've been so aloof these past two days. Have I made you angry?"

"Yes, you have, by following me. I would have invited you if I had wanted you along." Inez tossed her dark head.

Freddy was silent. He kept his eyes on the sidewalk. Inez glanced at him, beginning to weaken a trifle. She knew he was angry, but he wouldn't stay that way for long. If he would ever get so mad at her, that he could choke her, and stay that way, Inez felt that she could care a little more for him. But he would be frowning one minute and laughing the next. Nothing made him real mad.

"What are you doing?" she asked crossly as Freddy took her hand and tried to steer her into a doorway.

"I'm going to buy you some violets." Freddy smiled entreatingly.

Inez hadn't noticed that it was a florist's shop he was propelling her into. She jerked her hand away impatiently.

"I don't want any flowers," she told him. "My room is so full of them now, I can hardly breathe. Freddy, you're absolutely impossible." They were walking on now. "I treat you like a pup underfoot and you want to buy me flowers. Haven't you any pride?"

"Nope." He flashed her his en-

gaging grin. "Not where you're concerned. I'm absolutely wild about you and you know it, you aggravating little witch." He caught her hand again.

"Quit acting so young," Inez scolded. "The trouble with you, Freddy, is that you've got too much money. You're spoiled."

"I'm spoiled? What about you? If you say so, I'll throw all my money away and be poor."

"Yes, you would!" Inez scoffed. "You wouldn't know how to start being poor."

"And you would, I suppose? I guess you'd like being Mrs. Poor Cranston."

"About as well as I'll like being Mrs. Rich Cranston. I'm not so sure I'm going to be Mrs. Cranston at all."

"Yes, you are," he said firmly, squeezing her hand

with his ring on it. "And it won't be long now."

"See you at dinner," Freddy promised as he left her in the hotel lobby.

Inez went to her mother's suite first. Mrs. Compton, who was resting on a chaise longue, raised a quizzical eyebrow as Inez entered.

"Where have you been, Inez?" she asked in a grieved tone.

"I went for a walk. Listen, mother, does Freddy have to follow me everywhere I go?"

"Why, Inez!" her mother exclaimed. "If you're in love with Freddy and going to marry him, you shouldn't mind his being with you."

Inez frowned. "That's just it,"



she said. "I'm not in love with him and I'm not sure that I'm going to marry him."

"Tut, tut, my dear. Freddy will make an ideal husband for you. You imagine things."

"You're always saying I imagine things. But I'm not imagining when I tell you I don't love Freddy Cranston."

"You're so young," her mother sighed. "How can you be sure you don't love him?"

Inez looked at her mother in dismay. Their arguments always ended thus. Inez's clear brown eyes clouded and Mrs. Compton, seeing it, changed the subject.

"Your new evening gown came. It's in your room."

Glad of an excuse, Inez went to her room. She unwrapped the package that lay on the bed and held the clinging chiffon against her cheek. It was a lovely dress. She longed to wear it, but finally hung it away resolutely. No evening dress to-night, no dinner to-night with Freddy. Somehow she would manage to get away and go to the lake with Perry Dixon.

Inez studied herself speculatively in the mirror as she cold-creamed her face. It was a nice face, she decided, and she was glad because of Perry. She piled her jewelry carelessly on the dressing table, pinned her hair high on her head, and undressed methodically.

After a leisurely bath, she wrapped a peach satin negligee about her and settled herself in the pillows on the bed. She made a pretense of reading. Would her mother never go to dinner?—she wondered.

At last she heard the knock she had been waiting for.

"Come in," Inez called tremulously. Would she be able to put

this act over so her mother would not be suspicious?

"What in the world?" Mrs. Compton exclaimed, her face puzzled as she surveyed Inez. "Why aren't you dressed?"

"I have a headache, mother. I'm not going to dinner—couldn't eat a bite if I had to."

Mrs. Compton looked at her dubiously. "I'll send something up to you. Would you like some tea?"

"Nothing! Don't bother. I'll be all right."

Inez saw the door close with relief. Then she slipped out of bed, across the room, and turned the key in the lock.

Inez breathed a sigh of thanksgiving as she slipped into the car beside Doctor Dixon.

"On time," he commented, guiding the car down a side street. The doctor's tiny coupé seemed strange to Inez after the luxurious sedan Freddy drove. But then he couldn't possibly have as much money as Freddy Cranston. There were only a few people who had that much.

"How did you get away?" Perry asked curiously.

"I told mother I had a headache and wasn't going to dinner. As soon as she left, I got up and dressed." Inez laughed. "It was easy." She leaned back and relaxed, gave herself up to the thrill of Perry Dixon's nearness. She felt herself trembling at the thought that soon she would be in his arms, and would know again the delicious madness of his kisses.

"Well, here we are," Perry said at last. They stood on the lake shore, arm in arm, breathing deeply of the cool darkness of the night. Everything was clear and still, and Inez was sure that she could hear her heart beating wildly. The water

lapping gently at the shore lulled her into a dreamy stupor.

"I feel," she said, "like a white bird soaring out over the water."

Perry drew her close and, tilting her chin, kissed her. "We will soar, sweet. We will soar up into the clouds. Do you see that dark object out there? That's the house boat." He led her a little way up the shore to his motor boat which was ready and waiting. He helped her in and took his place at the motor.

They could not talk then for the noise. He guided the boat skillfully out into the dark water. Inez sat very still and the cool wind blew her hair. She looked down at the water fearfully. She was afraid of water. It fascinated her, and yet she was afraid. She had never been able to conquer this unreasonable fear. Perhaps it was because she was not a good swimmer.

Perry turned off the motor and the boat glided the last few feet to the house boat. Inez felt her foot firmly on the steps that led to the small platform. Perry tied the boat and followed her. He took a key from his pocket and unlocked the door. Inez looked longingly across the water to the dim shore line. But it was too late now to change her mind.

"There will be a moon later," he said, looking at the sky before they went in.

Inez stood in the center of the room, turning around.

"How adorable!" she exclaimed. It was as cleverly planned as his office. There were curtains at the windows. There was a bed, a table, a stove, a few chairs, books, and a radio. She looked down—even a rug on the floor. And an ice box!

"Like it?" he asked, pleased.

"It's grand," Inez said.

And then she was in his arms. With Perry's lips pressed against her own, she forgot her fear of the water surrounding them, forgot that she had any misgivings about coming with him. Perry kissed her again and again. His caresses left her weak and spent. Suddenly Inez pushed him from her.

"Don't!" she whispered.

Perry laughed as he gazed at her flushed face. "I'll mix us a drink." And he proceeded to do so—except, Inez noticed, he did not mix one for himself, but drank a jigger of straight whisky. Inez gasped.

"When you drink like that," she said, "you take my breath away." She sipped her own mild drink.

"That's a man's drink," Perry said.

"I hope you can take it like a man."

"Wait and see. That's just a beginning," he promised. His passionate kisses rained on her face and throat. Inez was lost in his kisses, unaware of anything else—until, with trepidation, she watched him go for another drink.

It really *was* just a beginning, she thought an hour later as Perry Dixon imbibed drink after drink. He was having still another one, and Inez was afraid.

"Don't!" she cried. "Don't drink any more!"

Perry laughed at her and drained the glass.

"Afraid, little girl?" he asked as he came and sat beside her.

"You shouldn't drink like that," she scolded. "You have to take me home soon." Perry caught her to him and his alcohol-laden kiss repulsed her. She hated a drunk, and Perry was getting sloppy. What would she do if he were too drunk to steer the boat? He was lying across the bed now, eyes closed. The



Perry caught her to him and his alcohol-laden kiss repulsed her. She hated a drunk, and Perry was getting sloppy. What could she do? Suddenly she was terror-stricken.

warm room, the potent whisky were taking effect.

"Perry!" Inez cried, her hands at her throat. "Perry, get up! You've got to take me home. You can't pass out like this! Perry!" She waited, terror-stricken. Perry mumbled something incoherent without opening his eyes.

"Perry!" Inez shook him.

"Yes, dear," he answered vaguely. "Whatcha want, Helen? Sweetest little wife in the world." And he fell back into a stupor.

Inez gasped. Wife! So he was married! She felt tears on her cheek and brushed them away. The cad! She was both hurt and disgusted.

And here she was in the middle of a lake with a drunken man whom she hardly knew.

The realization of her predicament made Inez cold with fear. She shouldn't have come. Of course, she shouldn't have. But that did not keep her knees from shaking, did not warm her cold body. Panicky, she looked about the room. She had to get a breath of air. With a last glance at Perry, who still lay prone on the bed, Inez opened the door.

She stood quietly in the cool lake breeze for a minute. The air felt good on her hot face. The moon was up now and it was a lovely night outside. But inside—Inez shuddered. What was she to do? She looked down at the water and a chill passed over her. There was Perry's boat and across the lake she could see the shore, but she might as well have been in the middle of the ocean for all the good it would do her.

Inez sat down on the steps and buried her head in her arms. She might have to stay here all night. Perry might get nasty, too. She wished that his sweet Helen was here to take care of him, and that she, Inez, was safely at the hotel with Freddy.

Inez sighed. She scanned the lake again. Not a sign of life anywhere. If only somebody would happen along in a boat, she would hail them. Didn't any one ever go boat riding in the moonlight? She had thought she heard a boat pass while she was inside. But she might have been mistaken.

Inez didn't know how long she sat there, growing more and more alarmed. And she saw a light in the distance. Was it, could it be a boat? She jumped up and strained her eyes to see. Yes, it was a boat

and it was coming to her—fast. She took off her white coat and waved it frantically. They could see her plainly in the moonlight. If only they would stop! Inez bit her lip to keep back the tears.

The boat was slowing down. It was stopping. She heard a sound inside the room. Perry was rousing. Her heart stood still. Then she gave a glad cry as the boat slid alongside her and she saw that Freddy Cranston was in it.

"Life-saver," she breathed as he helped her in without a word. "How did you happen along, Freddy?" she asked as he got the motor going again.

"I followed you," he mumbled. "Saw you leave the hotel."

"Oh." Inez sighed. And she was not angry because he had followed her. But she could tell, even in the moonlight, that he was furious.

"I'm sorry, Freddy," she said contritely. "I shouldn't have come out here with a strange man."

"Your business," he answered gruffly. "Next time I won't interfere."

"There won't be any next time," she said firmly.

Freddy didn't answer. He remained angrily silent while he tied the boat and helped her into his car. She snuggled up against him, hoping he would drive with one arm about her. But his body was rigid and he kept both hands on the wheel.

By the time they reached the hotel and Freddy had not yet spoken, Inez was worried. Suppose this should be the time that Freddy didn't come across! Suppose——

"Freddy," she faltered. He paused to listen, but did not encourage her. Inez threw her arms around his neck. "Freddy, I told

you I was sorry! Don't treat me like this!"

He took her arms from his neck firmly.

"Your mother will be worried. We had better go in."

He wouldn't have followed her if he hadn't cared, Inez repeated all the way to her room. But she was not convinced.

At her door, Freddy paused.

"Tell your mother good-by for me. I'm going home in the morning—early."

"Freddy!" He left her in tears. How could he?

Somehow, Inez explained things to her mother. Somehow, she got through the night. But the first rays of the sun brought her quickly from an uneasy slumber. She dressed hurriedly. She must make one more effort at reconciliation before Freddy left.

She found him in the coffee shop, eating an early breakfast.

Inez sat down at his table, uninvited. She gave her order. Freddy ate on, calmly, ignoring her.

"Are you really going home, Freddy?" she asked.

"Certainly." He looked at her coldly. "You say I'm just like a bad penny—following you about, turning up at the wrong time——" He shrugged.

"I didn't mean it. You see," she said, "I—I'm afraid I love you." There were tears in her eyes and she was reaching for her handkerchief, unashamed.

Freddy weakened. His eyes lighted and he reached across the table for her hand.

"Is that on the level?"

She nodded. "Yes, Freddy, it's on the level."

"Don't you know that I love you, Inez?"

"I want you to. Are you still going home?"

"Not until you do."

Inez's face brightened through her tears. She didn't believe he had ever intended to go. But that didn't matter. Nothing mattered so long as Freddy smiled like that again.



RADIO RUSE

[F I could trim my trembling voice
With necessary vocal flounces,
I'd exercise a secret choice
And be the fellow who announces.

I'd broadcast over ILY
And never seek another station;
Between the songs I'd simply sigh
But not for lack of inspiration.

The wave length would be infinite,
The theme would be a kiss or two
And here's the strangest part of it—
No one could listen in but you.

BROCK MILTON.



House Party Girl

By Philip Fair

A SERIAL—Part II.

CHAPTER III.

DULCIE SOANE found herself absently answering the young man who lead her through the steps of the dance. The expression on Damaris Souval's face had star-

tled her, something about it had shaken her to the very roots of her being.

It confirmed what Gervase had said as more than just idle words. And Dulcie felt herself chilling as if it might have had something to do

with some one very close to her. Alan Souval's sister. She had the feeling of a web drawing in around her, something close and vicious and poisonous. She was oppressed by a strange sense of futility.

She escaped as soon as she could from the clamoring of the stag line and sought a quiet corner. All the desire for dancing had vanished from her. She turned slightly at sensing a presence near her and saw Elsenä.

The girl smiled. "You! Sitting out! I can't believe my eyes!"

"Tired," Dulcie murmured.

"Yes, you would be. You're so terribly popular. It seemed to me that every man in the place had his eyes on you. That's the life! It must be grand to have money"—sighing.

Dulcie turned to her, smiling slowly.

"Oh, I don't know, Elsenä. I think I'd rather be in your shoes. Poor and wanted—I mean, really wanted."

"I wouldn't. I'd rather be you—rich. Their wanting you doesn't mean anything. Not a thing. When women want you around it just means they're not afraid of you—not very flattering that! While with you—well, they are afraid of you; in terror of their lives!"

"Afraid of me?" Dulcie was laughing just a shade derisively.

"Yes, afraid of your looks. Afraid of your brain. Women are always afraid of things like that in other women. I'd rather have their fear

and respect than the milk-and-water thing their liking is. It's like that"—with a little snap of her fingers.

Dulcie was silent. There seemed no answer to Elsenä's reasoning. After a space the other girl went on:

"Take Damaris. She's always been the most generous of hostesses—free drinks, food, lodging for all her friends any time and such

parties! Things like this all the time. And they really can not afford it. But do you think any of these people are really her friends?" Elsenä laughed softly. "Why, if she made the least little slip every woman here would be at her tooth and nail! They'd tear the flesh from her very bones—spiritually, I mean. Of course, they could not actually do it and get away with it."

Dulcie found herself merely looking at the other girl, unable to speak, chilling with the seeming forecast of horror. If Damaris made the least little slip! And she was Alan's sister. She was suddenly panicky with a desire to do something, warn some one, stop something. And yet there was nothing she could do aside from carrying on like a social human being.

At the sound of her name spoken her heart started with almost stifling swiftness.

"Dulcie Soane!" The accents were warmly glad. "I've been looking for you! Dance?"

THE STORY SO FAR: Dulcie, only and adored daughter of Tim Soane, becomes the house guest of aristocratic Damaris Souval; Tim, powerful politically, having maneuvered the invitation from Damaris's father, who needed Tim's favor. Damaris represents the finest blood of the old South while Dulcie is the daughter of a self-made man who forged his way from the wrong side of the tracks. At the party Dulcie meets an old friend, Gervase Drummond who tells her that the summer before he and Damaris had an apartment together in New York. During this conversation Damaris, flaming with anger, takes Gervase from Dulcie, quite rudely.

"And would it seem unmaidenly if I admitted that I'd been wondering where you were?"

He drew her a bit closer as he answered:

"I hoped you'd say something like that and mean it."

"I do."

"I was out seeing to having some more drinks mixed. Don't know what's gotten into Mari to-night. She's usually such a good hostess, sees that everything keeps moving and there's plenty of everything, but she's falling down on that job to-night."

Dulcie looked out across the dancers. Damaris was nowhere to be seen, neither was Gervase. That was an opening. She could have said something to Alan that would have made him watchful and, if he could be, protective of his sister. And yet the thing as she looked at it deteriorated to the appearance of gossip. She would be repeating a vicious thing that a man had told her about a girl. It wouldn't do. She'd have to spare him in some other way.

"Perhaps she's just having a good time at this party instead of taking her duties as hostess so seriously," she said brightly after a moment. "Let's hope so."

"Yes, Mari's a sweet kid. Got some distorted values that a little living will iron out, but at heart she's all right."

Dulcie knew instantly that Damaris had spoken to Alan about his attention to Dulcie, criticized it. Well, that was easy to understand. There were generations of traditions behind it. It would be hard to change all that in a moment. Suddenly, and strangely, she found herself seeking excuses for Damaris and so for her kind. Alan's voice broke through her thoughts:

"Let's get out of here for a while," he suggested. "Let me get you a wrap. The terrace is swell in the moonlight."

"My things are in the little back room—any cloak will do." Dulcie said, but he was gone and so quickly back that she knew he hadn't gone to her room.

"I've brought this shawl of my sister's"—laying it lightly around her—"she got it in Mexico last year."

Ducie gathered the thing around her; it was quite lovely. Alan lead her to the terrace and they sat down in a long chair for two. The Louisiana moon hung low and warm over them and the scent of Japan Plum in bloom came to them from a tree in the yard of a little house across the street. Neither of them spoke but Alan put his hand over the girl's.

"You're very lovely, Dulcie Soane," he said finally. "You've gone to my head."

"Sure it's not just the moon?"—trying to make the words light with laughter while actually she had the feeling of taking them syllable by syllable and holding them against her heart.

"Quite. I've seen the moon often. I'm quite familiar with it in various ports and places. But I've never seen a girl like you. I'm beginning to wonder if I'm going to get over it and feeling pretty convinced that I won't—and pretty glad about it."

The words thrilled to the very soul of the girl and an answer born of that thrill trembled on her lips when a sudden sight froze them to silence.

Two figures were coming up from the canal. Dulcie recognized them.

They were in close embrace.

Dulcie looked up suddenly at Alan Souval.

"Mind getting me a drink?" she asked. "A straight one. I'm just a little chilly out here."

Alan was on his feet instantly.

"Your wish is my command!"—as he hurried away.

It had been just in time so that he missed the sight of the two coming in that close embrace. They were near the reclining figure of the girl in the chair, quite completely submerged in the shadows. They were oblivious of any other living thing.

They paused.

"Come on," Gervase was saying in a voice in which Dulcie recognized the thick, slurred tones of liquor. "They'll never miss you. People who're having a good time on some one else's money never miss anybody!"—with his usual cynical reasoning. "Get a wrap. We can be over at my place in two shakes. We can talk this thing out there."

"But who's there now?" Damaris asked in a shaken voice. "I want to be alone with you."

"No one but the servants, and they'll be asleep. I told them I'd not be back and you know I haven't any family any more."

Dulcie, still listening in the shadows, knew that Gervase was referring to the big sprawling plantation that his father had inherited from a brother too late for it to be of much benefit to him. It lay most of the time now sleeping and unused under its great moss-draped live oaks. Gervase was speaking again:

"Hurry up! Get something on and we'll go!"

They clung together just a moment, or it seemed that the girl was clinging to the man a little bit terror-stricken and then she turned and ran lightly toward the door.

Dulcie came to her feet, galvan-

ized by a sudden sense of responsibility fraught with alarm. She couldn't let Damaris do anything like that! After all, Damaris was Alan's sister, and if anything ever got out— She shivered suddenly as she thought of Elsen's words, "they'd tear the flesh from her bones."

She stood held motionless by the very storm of strange emotions that rioted her. She had such an oppressing sense of responsibility and yet such a feeling of utter helplessness. For a moment she wished that she had not heard, or that she had let Alan stay and hear.

That would have been better. There probably would have been a terrific quarrel between the two men that would have ended in Gervase being ordered from the house and that might have precipitated a quarrel between brother and sister, but even that would have been better than what was about to take place now.

Dulcie Soane knew a moment of terrifying indecision that seem to pass with the slow movement of a century as she stood there. She seemed to know what it was like to feel the actual passage of time with the aging it brought.

And then with one of those sudden swift turns of the wheel of fortune, decision in the matter was completely taken out of her hands.

Gervase turned abruptly and stared at her.

"Well, what are you waiting for?" he asked, not too gently. "You're standing there like a statue and letting precious moments that we might have together slip by!"

Automatically, Dulcie moved toward him, wordless, and then stopped.

Gervase seemed to stare through the shadows intently for a moment

Damaris and Gervase were in a close embrace, oblivious of Dulcie. "Come on, let's go over to my place," Gervase was saying. "We'll be alone there. They'll never miss you here."



and then moved toward her to take her hand and lead her along, saying:

"Come on! With a moon like this, why hesitate? There's romance in the air!"

And she felt herself being hurried strongly and swiftly toward where a small car was parked. She didn't speak even after Gervase had rather hastily and almost roughly put her into the car. He had mistaken her

for Damaris; the shawl that Alan had brought her had done that.

Once, just before Gervase started the motor of the car she thought she heard Alan's voice calling her, and as the car moved quietly out the drive she glimpsed the figure of Damaris in a long wrap running toward the drive like a pursued ghost.

She shivered slightly and drew into her corner. Going away like that with Gervase had been anything but what she had wanted to do. There had been a time when she had liked him, he had been a gay and carefree companion for light moments. But he'd changed—changed darkly when he could speak so casually of a girl in a way that would have damned her.

"You're not talking much, beautiful," Gervase said finally as they drove along the road toward Morgan City.

Dulcie turned from her thoughtful inspection of the dark waters of the bayou, slightly startled. There had been something about his tone, just a little as if he was laughing at her, as if he had a little secret joke. She didn't speak immediately so he went on suavely:

"Oh, come on, say something! You needn't be afraid your voice will give you away!" He was laughing at her.

"And I thought I'd fooled you," she said, with the swift thought that all her scheming had been for nothing.

"You did at first—the shawl did. Damaris had it in New York, you see, so I got pretty familiar with it!" The lightness of his tone was a soiling thing; its suggestiveness seemed even to soil Dulcie and she knew a sensation of drawing away from it. "But the minute I touched your hand I knew. There's something electric about you. You ignite, my

dear!" Once more the girl knew that sense of shrinking.

"Then I suppose you're going to turn around and take me back and get the original partner of your dark scheme?"

"Oh, no!"—suavely. "Quite the contrary. You and I are going on together! As a matter of fact, I'm highly pleased at the change!"

"But you won't be"—dryly.

"Meaning, beautiful?"

"That I won't fit into your scheme."

"You've no idea, my dear, what possibilities you have!" he declared, with smooth audacity. "But the thing that interests me is why you were so keen on sparing La Souval one more little experience."

"I don't know—exactly." She paused, conscious of a feeling of having been a little foolhardy, overzealous, perhaps. After all, if Damaris really felt that way about things—

"Well, not that it matters! I'm highly pleased myself, thank you! Though I might have liked it better if it had been a really voluntary thing on your part. I have a sneaking idea that you're not as fond of me as you once were."

Dulcie looked up at the man frankly and spoke so:

"I used to think you were a grand playmate, Gervase; about the best ever. But now I don't know what to think of you. Your easy attitude toward girls alarms me."

"For me, beautiful?" he asked, still laughing softly at her.

"No, for them"—just a trace sharply. "You know girls can't do the sort of things you want them to and get away with it; not in these small communities anyhow. Especially when men tell."

"How about you?" They had pulled up at the great rambling old

house, still lovely even in its neglect. "How are you going to get away with this?"

"It doesn't matter so much about me. I'm not one of them, anyhow, and whatever they'd say couldn't hurt me very much," she replied, with a sigh of relief that the car had been safely brought to a stop. She hadn't felt too sure driving with Drummond, even though he seemed to be one of those rare people who could drive as well drunk as sober. "And now you'd better let me get behind that wheel and take us both back before we are missed—not that I mean that word missed in too much its actual sense. Although you will be. Why do you fascinate Damaris so?—I wonder. Like playing with fire, I suppose."

"You're not trying to offend me, I hope?"

"Oh, far from it!"—matching the suavity of his tone. "And now may I have those keys?"

"You may not," he told her, smiling, as he put them in his pocket and stood holding the door open for her. "Are you getting out or are you going to give me the pleasure —" He waited only an instant and then gathered her up and walked quite steadily to the house. He put her on her feet at the door but continued to keep firm hold on her.

"I'm a hospitable man, my dear. I must mix you a drink." He took her into the grand old hall and then back to a sort of study where he had a stock of liquor and a small electric ice box that looked like an ornamental piece of furniture. "You've no idea what a gift I have for mixing drinks! And I know one that Damaris taught me at the apartment."

"Will you stop bringing up that situation! I want to forget that

I've heard you say such a thing!" Dulcie said sharply. "There's no use keeping it continually in one's mind!" For it seemed that he was intent on not forgetting himself the stain on the reputation of Damaris Souval.

"Not jealous, darling? Because if you keep on as you are I'll have to think that!" And then when she did not reply he went on in a voice that had a hard note: "After all, you and I owe that gang more than we can ever pay them!"—almost bitterly.

"I'm not interested in paying them back that way. And, after all, you've been more or less accepted, why stay so bitter?"

"Why stay so bitter?" He'd lifted a straight drink to his lips while he was mixing. "I wonder if you know that I had a sister? An older sister?"

Dulcie lifted her eyes to stare through the dim light at him.

"No, I didn't," she said.

"Well, I had. And she was very beautiful."

"It's easy to believe that—knowing you. And your mother always made me think of angels. I'd been taught that they were the most beautiful things you know."

He ignored the subtle flattery which Dulcie herself had not intended quite as it sounded.

"Well, Andrew Pade was bowled over by her beauty and hadn't the honor to come through such a situation decently—if you can understand that. I've never known since where Glorietta vanished to. I was too young at the time to take proper vengeance, but the thing shortened the lives of both my father and mother, especially when Glory just disappeared. Went the way of all flesh, I suppose. I've carried that debt with me all these years. I

suppose I'll carry it to the grave!"

Dulcie didn't answer. Andrew Pade! A pillar of the church and society there at Morgan City and Damaris's mother's brother! And he couldn't even have been so young then, for he was an old man now. The thing was beyond words. There was nothing she could say to Gervase. He was wrong, of course. His wasn't revênge on Damaris, it was something else. But there was no use trying to tell him that. He was talking again as he handed her a glass:

"So I'm paying that crowd back a little. If you think I ever cared for Damaris or could have you're wrong. She hasn't the stuff. Neither have any of the rest of them. Stupid dolls compared with you, Dulcie. I mean that." And, somehow, she knew that he did. "But I've a debt to pay." He lifted his glass as if to pledge that payment.

"But that isn't paying it where it's owed, Gervase," Dulcie said quietly.

A queer, twisted smile writhed over the man's features.

"I suppose you mean that I should kill old Pade"—shaking his head slowly. "That wouldn't serve at all. It would merely put him out of his misery. You can't tell me he isn't haunted by Glory's face every time he looks at Damaris. He's crazy about her—hasn't any too much money himself, but he forks over for Mari's whims just the same."

He paused for a moment and considered the liquid in his glass.

"No," he went on finally and something about his face and voice made Dulcie shiver, "I've thought it all out. There's just one way to make him pay. His heart'll break when people begin talking about

Mari. As they're going to." The last words came almost casually after a little pause.

"Garvase!" she protested. "You can't do that! It isn't"—searching for a word—"human!"

"Human!" He was staring straight in her direction, but scarcely seeing her and seemed to hold the word aloft on a point of ironic ridicule.

Dulcie felt his mood, but she struggled against it.

"I know," she said, her hands going out to him in a helpless gesture, "but just because one man was a beast——"

He caught her hands and silenced whatever she would have said with a caress that brushed her lips swiftly.

"I shouldn't be!" he finished the thought for her. "I know! But I have been! And I'll continue to be! My only regret is, Dulcie, that it makes me unfit to tell you I love you! And I've always wanted to do that! Always! But never more than now! You've always been the most desirable woman on earth to me and I presume you always will be!"

They were silent for a moment. Something about the man's admission hurt, perhaps because in so cynical and worldly a person it was so sincere. It wasn't quite the thing one expected of Gervase Drummond.

"There, now, I've told you," he said. "And that's that. I'll probably never speak of it again to you, but I'll mean it all my life, Dulcie."

There was a solemnity about it, quite unconscious and unplanned on his part, that brought a sense of aching weight to the girl's heart and a quick mist to her eyes.

"Thanks, Gervase," she said not quite steadily. "I'll like remember-



"Strange this," he said at length. "I ran away with you, dragged you to my wicked lair and now am going to let you go after having only kissed you very chastely! That isn't the way things are done!"

ing that. There'll be times when it will help to know that you felt that way."

"Not many, Dulcie"—shaking his head at her. "You won't need that, not your kind of girl. Life will just naturally bring everything you want right around to your doorstep. You've got that look in your eyes."

"Probably not everything, Gervase," she murmured thoughtfully.

"Everything. Even Alan Souval."

Dulcie started. She hadn't realized it was so plain, but she said nothing, merely stood looking at Drummond, pity in her eyes.

He drained his glass and then took another straight while Dulcie watched him silently. He started mixing another drink.

"No more for me, Gervase," Dulcie said in a suddenly more gentle tone.

"Sure?" And as she shook her head negatively: "All right, then I'll have to drink alone."

Once more she watched silently while he refilled and drained his glass.

"You're drinking too much, Gervase," she said finally very quietly.

"So what?" he asked, after staring at her for a while.

"Well, so we'd better go on back."

"You go. I'll stay here. I'm sick of the mess. And I've been drinking too much anyway." Then he looked up at her sharply: "Not afraid to drive alone at night, are you?" Dulcie shook her head. He continued: "Didn't think Tim Soane's girl would be."

Dulcie rose.

Drummond was smiling peculiarly at her.

"Strange this," he said, at length. "I ran away with you, dragged you to my wicked lair and now am letting you go after having only kissed

you very chastely! That isn't the way things are done! And yet"—cynical again—"I suppose it happens more often than we think! Sex is the emptiest thing in the world—without love." He was on his feet at the table, toying with a glass.

Dulcie watched him. His profile, face and figure, as she saw it, was a handsome, impressive thing. He turned to her suddenly, his face slightly flushed.

"And you wouldn't leave like this—only kissed—Dulcie Soane, if I thought there was the slightest spark of emotion in you toward me—even hate. For a man can do something with even hate!"

"I've always felt you were about the best friend I've ever had, Gervase—after Tim," she said, still gently.

He grinned wryly.

"And a man can't do anything with that."

"Your liquor's talking now."

"Better get on your way, lady, before it says anything more!" He was smiling, but there was a warm, desirous light in his eyes.

"Sure you won't come back with me? They'll be looking for you. Damaris will wonder. She'll miss you."

"That's just why I'm not going back. She got a break to-night—well, maybe it's due her. She's not such a bad kid, just foolish."

"But I hate to leave you here alone, Gervase," Dulcie said, after a little silence.

He smiled.

"It's my home. After all, there's no better place to be when you're tight."

"You're probably right." She lingered a moment. He seemed suddenly more like the old Gervase and she would have liked to have done or said something that would have

told him so, but found nothing that fitted the moment. "Well, so long, old man!"

He handed her the keys as she spoke, and made a gesture toward seeing her to the car, but she stayed it.

"Please don't, Gervase," she implored. "I'll feel better at least, leaving you here in your chair. I'll be quite all right, you know. I always am!" She hurried away too quickly for him to carry out his resolution.

CHAPTER IV.

Alone in the car she knew an impulse to turn toward New Orleans and go back to her father and the things that had long been her friends. But even he wouldn't quite approve of that gesture.

She turned back toward Franklin and drove swiftly. Once a car passed that she thought she recognized and the white face behind the driver's wheel looked familiar. And yet it couldn't be. Damaris Souval wasn't the kind of girl who drove along lonely roads alone at night. She, Dulcie, might do that sort of thing, but not Damaris.

It was almost dawn when she finally reached the Souval house, still alight with its gayety. She swung Gervase's car around to the back of the house, parked it and then would have hurried in the back way and gone directly to her room. She was in no mood for further partying. But a figure blocked her way as she would have gone up the narrow stairs to the back of the house.

"Dulcie!"

She looked up into Alan Souval's eyes, concerned and hurt and vaguely startled. She was reminded of the glance of her pet dog when

she had unintentionally hurt it. He caught her hands.

"You've been gone so long! Since you sent me to get a drink! You were only stalling, but why?"

Dulcie herself was startled, almost into a revelation of what had happened. It hurt so to see Alan looking like that and being so earnest. And then she took the only note she could, that of blasé gayety and suffered horribly at the look of deeper pain in the man's eyes.

"You wouldn't ask a girl a thing like that on a night like this, would you, Alan? You know what nights are made for, after all, or you should!"

"Oh, I'm sorry!"—a trace stiffly. "I thought—well—" He paused and looked away and seemed to make no effort to finish.

It was suddenly as if he felt it was scarcely worth the effort of finishing, as if he'd been dealt a blow and defense was quite useless. But he had not turned away, before Johnny Vibart, his not strong eyes peering anxiously out from behind thick glasses joined them rather excitedly.

"You know I can't find a thing of her, Alan, old man! She's disappeared into thin air, apparently. Vanished! I'm quite concerned. Don't you think we'd better send out an alarm?"

"Not yet, Vibart," came quietly from Souval.

"Who are you talking about?" Dulcie asked.

"Damaris." She felt the anxiety in Alan's voice. "We haven't seen her in ever so long. She seems to have gone somewhere. My car's gone, too." He was looking straight at Dulcie as if he expected some enlightening reply from her.

But she made none. She forgot

for the moment that he was there as she recalled the white shadow of a face that she saw behind the wheel

of a car that passed her on the dark road back to Franklin. It had been Damaris then. Damaris going to Drummond's place. But she would find him too drunk to even talk to her and so would probably turn back immediately.

Dulcie turned back to Alan then and for a moment she considered telling him what she thought, then silenced the words. After all, she didn't know. She had no right to air her suppositions. It might involve Damaris rather



She suffered horribly at the look of deep pain in the man's eyes, but forced herself to say gayly: "You shouldn't ask a girl where she's been on a night like this. You know what nights are made for after all."

badly and she might not have been the person in the car at all. It might have been some one else. So all she said to Souval was: "How strange!" in a voice filled with fear.

For in spite of the fact that it seemed foolish to be alarmed she was. Horribly so. She had again that sense of a web drawing in about her.

Alan nodded.

"Yes, Damaris hasn't been in the habit of doing such things. She's always been so dependable, but she seemed to go haywire on this party from the very first."

"Funny, you know, her doing that!" young Vibart added pointlessly. That seemed to be like Johnny, merely repeating the things that other people said and not too often in even different words. But the Vibart fortune carried him.

Alan Souval paused to stare at him a moment and Dulcie wondered if there was a trace of annoyance in the gaze. Then Alan turned away and left them, seemingly oblivious, even of her presence. It was as if he had forgotten her completely. Not that she blamed him exactly when she thought of the flippant reply she had given him only a few moments before.

Dulcie turned toward the living rooms. The gayety had died down; lights had been softened and there were only a few couples lingering around in the shadows on the deep divans and inviting chairs. There would be no point in going in there and interrupting.

She turned to the stairway. She was beginning to be tired anyhow. And she wasn't comfortable mentally. The memory of her flippancy to Alan Souval annoyed her. When she reached her room, Dulcie found

that she had no desire for bed or sleep.

She looked around sharply in the room lighted only by the light reflected from the hall and the moon. She had a sudden sense of another presence in the room. And then instantly dismissed it as foolish without even bothering to turn on the light. It was one of her pet theories never to indulge a fear of any kind. Tim had taught her that. He never had allowed her to be afraid of anything.

Dulcie slipped her dress off, replacing it with a delicate negligee and then moved to the window to look down over the quiet, dark canal. The early morning was peculiarly quiet and the scent of the Japan Plum was heavily sweet. It seemed such a lovely, calm star-spangled hour, much too peaceful for the riot of emotions that marked it—Gervase, Damaris, herself and perhaps—

She hadn't finished the thought when she turned swiftly, impelled by a startlingly real impression of another presence in the room with her. She turned practically into the arms of a man.

Dulcie didn't scream. She never did. And that was the first thing the man noted.

"Thank heavens," he said fervently, "you aren't the screaming kind! I had a bad moment just then when I didn't know whether you would or wouldn't!"

Dulcie had tensed. And then at the sound of the man's voice, cultivated, blasé and slightly, it seemed, familiar she relaxed and peered through the shadows.

He smiled.

"Alexander Saunders!" she finally exclaimed in low, shocked tones.

"And your most ardent admirer!"

"Too much liquor again!" She

was laughing at him a little. "But I wish you wouldn't select my room in which to sleep it off!"

"Are you purposely misunderstanding me?" Saunders asked suavely. "Or are you so naïve that you think I might sleep in a room which had known, and might be expecting your presence, your very gracious and beautiful presence!"

Dulcie laughed softly.

"So that's the mood you're in again, Alex," she said. "I wonder your wife lets you run loose if she knows what perfectly beautiful things you can think up to say to a girl! Some day, young man, some one's going to take you seriously and you'll be in a frightful mess!"

"But that's what I want you to do, Dulcie!"—taking her hands.

She let her hands lay in his unresisting for a moment. She couldn't be as angry at Alex as at most of the married men who made love to her. There was something rather more decent about his way of approach, even though he did do the most wild things—such as this prowling into her room in the dark. But there wasn't the almost insolent suggestion about him. And then he was always a little bit drunk; it could be excused a bit on that score. And he was never quite as secretive about it; he seemed quite willing that any one and every one should know that he thought she was pretty nice. On the rare intervals when he was completely sober, he treated her with the courtly manner of a cavalier.

"And to-morrow morning, sober,

you'd be trying to find some way out of it!" she said, still laughing at him.

"Not I, Dulcie! Haven't I been trying to make love to you ever since I've known you! You're the sweetest little sugar——"

"In the Louisiana bowl! I know! But that won't help me a bit with this crowd, Alex, if you're found in my room in the morning! Come on, clear out like a nice boy and let me get to bed."

"Dulcie, don't you know that the night was made for love and Thessalie's——"

"That's just it, Alex—where is your wife that you're running around on the loose at this hour?"

Saunders grinned like a schoolboy with a mischievous secret.

"I stacked her drinks! You see, I knew you were here!"

Dulcie laughed in spite of herself. Thessalie Saunders needed no stacking of drinks, as drinking was the one pleasure and interest of her life and she indulged it generously. There was something heroic and a little bit pathetic about the way Alex, with all his foolish faults, tried to take the responsibility for her passing out.

Dulcie was inclined to be gentle with him even though she was annoyed.

"You should be rewarded for your cleverness, Alex, but I'm going to send you packing just the same! Trot along now, or I'll think some one stacked your drinks!"

Saunders took her hands as if to draw her to him and then the motion was stayed by the distant chim-



ing of a bell. They counted the strokes as they stood motionless.

"Three," Dulcie said when the last faint echo was no longer audible. "Three! It'll soon be daylight. Thessalie may wake and miss you!"

"I don't care who misses me as long as I'm with you!" he declared, fiercely, and with a gesture toward her that Dulcie recognized as earnest and uncontrolled. The situation was getting unpleasant. After all, Alex had been drinking and he was one of a crowd that seemed to consider her fair game. She cast about momentarily, not that she was alarmed; she had had too many such situations to handle to be in the least alarmed, but she was annoyed, weary.

There was a figure moving about on the lawn that sloped down to the canal. It was familiar. She stared. Yes, it was Alan Souval. Dulcie turned back to Alex.

"There's our host down there on the lawn. If you don't go, Alex, I'm going to call him and ask him to put you out. Then Thessalie would hear of that and you'd never get through hearing of it!" There was laughter in her voice, but she was very much in earnest.

"No!" came doubtfully from the man as he stared down into the darkness of early morning. "What's he prowling around down there for! No good purpose, if you're asking me!"

"I'm asking only one thing of you, Alex—departure, swift and speedy! I give you two minutes!"

"You're a cruel little witch!" And then shaking his finger at her, as he backed toward the door: "If I find you're ditching me for that man down there, there'll be murder done this night!"

Dulcie laughed softly as he vanished, but at the same time she

knew a peculiar sense of fear. "Murder done this night!" Why should he have selected that gruesome phrase! He had been joking, of course, but something about it chilled Dulcie to the bone. It was as if she had stood in a cold wind and yet the night was balmy and mild.

With Saunders gone, she turned to the window. It really was Alan and he was standing as if in thought. She could see the light of his cigarette. She stared at him for a while and then saw him turn and wondered if he was looking toward her window.

She didn't move. Alan Souval, however, stood for only a moment more and then stepped toward the house. He was definitely looking up then; Dulcie could see that. Experimentally she waved. His hand moved in answer. He had seen her then! He had looked up purposely! He wasn't angry, or at least she would have an opportunity to try to explain and she would, regardless of what light it put any one in.

While she watched, Souval disappeared in the shadow of the house and then with no sound of steps on the stairs he appeared at her door.

"Dulcie!"

"Oh, I'm so glad you've come!"

"Then you had expected me? Were you waiting for me?" He was in the small inclosure of the room, taking her hands and drawing her to him. "You've hurt me more than you know to-night, dear," he said gently. "But I can't believe you intended to, and I blame myself, too, for not having told you first thing, there at your house, that I love you, though you should have known."

"I did, I think," she whispered softly, from the inclosure of his arms. "Or I hoped so anyhow."



"Just a house party girl!" cried Damaris. "That's what she is. The one girl the men can count on—sneaking up to her room nights. You don't think you're the first one, Alan? If you do, you must be simple!"



"Dulcie!" It was a caress on his lips. Dulcie rested in his arms quite unresisting. It was sweet to be there and comforting. She was so weary

of warding off offensive attentions when she was with the crowd Alan and his sister moved in. His voice as he went on was weighted with

sincerity that put her heart at peace. "I love you, Dulcie," he was saying. "Though this is a poor time for me to be saying that to any girl, especially you, with all your gorgeous habits and ways of living."

"Why, Alan?"—starting a little and looking up at him from the circle of his arms. "Why me, Alan?"

"Why you?"—whimsically. "Because you're such a gorgeous girl, and I haven't even a job—to say nothing of the money to support you in the manner you've been accustomed to!" There was laughter in his voice. "But I won't wait, Dulcie Soane! I'm not a patient man!" And then on a wry note: "I wonder what Tim Soane will say to his daughter's marrying a penniless, jobless man!"

"He'll love it! Strange as it may seem, Tim's been wanting me to select a husband and settle down. I think he wants to be a grandfather! And you're made to order, darling!"

"I'm glad you think so anyhow, sweet!"—drawing her closer and holding her happily there against his heart.

From her place of security in Alan's arms, Dulcie sensed movement on the stairs and then saw the figure of a girl come to the landing and stand for a moment as if resting. There was something vaguely familiar about the lines of the wrap the girl wore. Whoever it was moved on then as if to pass Dulcie's door. And then stopped suddenly and stood looking in.

So absorbed had Dulcie and Alan been that they had not realized or cared that the door of the room in which they stood was open.

"Well!"

Dulcie started slightly at sound of the voice and then knew a sense of relief. It was Damaris. So at last she was back and safely. All

thought of telling Alan why she had sent him for a drink and then disappeared had vanished from her mind at touch of his arms. Now it would not be necessary to mention the thing at all and she was glad. She hated to be in the position of carrying tales. That was all that occurred to her at first. The full significance of Damaris's remark didn't reach her immediately.

Alan started at sound of his sister's voice.

"Mari!" There was a relieved note in his voice. "I'm so glad you're here!"

"I should think you would be!"—with something very like a snarl.

Dulcie felt a sudden tautening of her senses. There was a frightening welter of emotions in the girl's voice—bitterness, hatred, and, somehow, a craven fear that glimmered out of her white face in an almost horrifying way.

"I should think you would be glad to be caught this way, Alan Souval! Especially with that girl! And here in the house that was your own mother's home! Haven't you any shame, either of you!"

It wasn't until then that Dulcie realized that Alan was in his pajamas, a lounding robe on over them, and soft slippers. That, of course, was why he had come up without making any noise on the stairs.

"It's not," Damaris was going on in a more controlled, but more angry voice, "that I'm surprised at its happening. But I'm surprised at your letting it happen here, Alan, in your own home." She seemed to be ignoring the girl entirely, as if taking it for granted that their codes were so different that she couldn't expect Dulcie to understand her. "Here where I live!"

"Don't be foolish, Mari," Alan finally found his voice. He con-

tinued to stand with his arm around Dulcie. "This is one of the sweetest and finest things that has happened in this house. It honors it! Dulcie and I love each other. We're going to be married as soon as I can dig up the wherewithal!"

"Married!" Once more that welling of violent emotions that seemed to erupt in her words like a suddenly ignited volcano and to be just as vicious. "You must be mad! Thinking of marrying a girl who receives you in her room at night and who commits the worse breach of selecting other people's houses to do it in!"

Dulcie tensed. Alan sensed it and held her closer.

"Please!" he said softly and she knew it was a plea to her and so stayed beside the man she loved

and faced the accusing girl fearlessly but without emotion.

"Mari, I can't have you saying such things! What's happened? You've never been this way before—vicious and cruel and vengeful toward other girls! Dulcie's just——" But the girl's voice broke in furiously:

"Just a house party girl! That's what she is! House party girl! She's at every one of them. You can't keep her out because her father's got money enough to buy her way in! And she hasn't pride enough to keep away from where she isn't wanted! House party girl! The one girl the men can count on—sneaking up to her room nights and such things! You don't think you're the first surely? If you do, you must be simple!"

TO BE CONTINUED.

Coming Next Week!

"Half Moon



on the Desert"

By . . .
VIOLET GORDON



Moonlight Madness

By Ives Tudor

THE curtain fell on the last act of "The Crossroads." Lance Hayes turned to smile down at Diane, and help her slip on the plain dark coat.

"Now that everything has turned out happily for our noble Oscar and his little Nell, suppose we top off the evening with a bite of supper at Tony's?"

"I'd love it," she agreed, thinking how expertly his tall, broad-should-

ered strength shielded her as they pressed through the crowded aisle and theater lobby.

But sitting across from him in the tiny booth at Tony's, she hardly touched the food on her plate. She stared into space, a look of tragedy in her wide, golden-brown eyes under winged dark brows.

"Thinking of Mat again, Diane?" Lance asked in a strained voice.

She started, flushed, and nodded.

One hand shielded her eyes from him as she nervously adjusted the black velvet *béret* that brought out the hint of gold in her lovely leaf-brown hair.

"How did you know?"

"You're pretty obvious, dear."

The tenderness in his voice, the adoration in his dark eyes as they rested on her face, drew her confidence.

"Lance, what am I going to do? Mat has broken his promise not to gamble, again. He's drinking, too, and neglecting his work at the bank to play the races."

"There isn't much one can do, Diane."

She replied, the quaver of tears in her voice: "To-night makes the third date this week he has failed to keep. But the thing that worries me most, is the fast crowd he's running with."

"By 'fast crowd,'" he put in cleverly, "you mean Cora Jacobs."

"Yes." Her poppy-red lips tightened grimly to match the sudden gleam of fire in her eyes. "She isn't—nice, Lance." Then, in a flare of rebellion: "Oh, why did Harry have to bring her here to sing in his night club? Mat was behaving beautifully until she came."

"Dear," he said pityingly, "Cora hasn't changed Mat. He has always been fickle. You'll have to accept that truth, if you accept him."

"But how can I, loving him as I do?"

"I rather think the other women who have loved him felt the same way. Belle Nevins, Alys Marshall, Marna Jerrod."

Diane flushed painfully. She had taken Mat away from Marna. But warm gratitude filled her heart because Lance had refrained from naming a dozen others before Belle.

"It's a wonder," he mused, sol-

emnly thoughtful, "that Mat couldn't see there's something more than just friendship between Cora and Harry."

She pounced on the suggestion, elaborating: "I've said as much to Mat. I've even stooped to repeating the gossip about them being—well, pretty intimate in New York before he came here to open his club. But Mat only flares up and shouts denials, insisting that I'm jealous of Cora." She laughed ruefully, looking down at the sapphire-and-diamond ring on her engagement finger, the symbol of Mat's troth and hers. "I suppose I am, really."

"Are you terribly in love with him, Diane?" Lance asked soberly.

"Terribly. But he was always so wild and irresponsible, so attractive to other women, that I never dared hope he'd ever care for me." She smiled tenderly. "Then the night our crowd rowed up to the Pirate's Cave for a beach supper—remember, Lance? There was a moon, and the waves that washed against the shore were lazy little ones that made scarcely any sound. And somebody brought along a guitar, and we sang." Her voice dropped to a breathless whisper. "Mat asked me to take a walk. He——" She broke off, adding with sweet conviction: "Yes, I do love him."

"You're too fine to love a man like Mat," he rasped, black eyes flashing in the white mask of his face. "You're flattered because he's handsome and a dozen women have made fools of themselves over him. He's fascinated because you're different from the others he has known. I tell you, Diane, it was only moonlight madness between you that night; that's all it is now."

"Oh, no, Lance!" She pressed small clenched hands over her heart. "I'd die, if I thought that." Her

faith remained shaken for less than a minute. She finished proudly, holding out for his inspection the hand that wore Mat's ring. "Doesn't that prove he loves me?"

Lance reached out and captured her hand. She pulled it away, but was conscious of a warm glow where his fingers had pressed hers; and wondered. Mat's touch thrilled her for the moment, but her flesh never tingled for seconds afterward, like it was tingling now.

"Diane," Lance whispered, his heart in his eyes, a low, throbbing note in his voice, "how can I give you up to Mat when I know he'll make you unhappy? He'll drag your fine pride in the mire of his cheap affairs; he'll drink and gamble all the days of his life, no matter how or where he gets the money. Oh, my dear, I love you so!"

Her lips trembled with pity for him. Tears misted her eyes, reflecting the hurt mirrored in his own.

"I'm so sorry, Lance."

His laugh was strained.

"You needn't be. I'd rather be hopelessly in love with you than have all the other girls in the world rolled into one."

She said unsteadily, because her heart was in the words: "The girl who wins you will be lucky, Lance. With you, she'll never know uncertainties or fears. There will never be any ugly shadows from your past to darken her future."

His lips tightened until the muscles along his jaw ridged. One strong brown hand pressed hard against the edge of the table; his dark eyes probed hers with something like anger in their depths.

"Yet I must be content with cold friendship. And Mat, who has stolen from his own employer, with an unenvious past where women are concerned, wins your love."

A terrible anger swept through her. And shame—because what he said was true—that made her face flame. The red receded slowly from her cheeks, leaving fury to blaze in twin points of fire in her eyes, and narrow the scarlet line of her lips.

"I think I've expected you to say that some day, Lance. Mat always said you would. He said you helped him to use it as a whip over me, to hurt us both because I didn't love you."

He jerked rigid, his face dark with a terrible anger that more than matched her own.

"Yet he sent you to me, pleading for the five hundred dollars that would cover his theft from the bank, knowing I'd do all this? And you dare to say he loves you!"

She made a motion to rise, but he reached out a strong hand and forced her back into the seat.

"You're going to listen to me, Diane. Mat asked you to marry him because he couldn't get your kisses any other way. He has no intention of marrying you. And because you insist on playing the game squarely, he'll tire of it soon. He put that ring on your finger, not as a symbol of his love, but because he knew it would be torture for me to see it there. He hates me, just as he hates any one who tries to get ahead. But me, in particular, because I know him for what he is—a cad and a weakling!"

Diane did not dare meet his eyes, lest her look wither him. Mat might be weak where money and women were concerned, but he truly loved her. And her love would ever be a shield between him and all temptations.

Tears blinded her eyes. "I'll never forgive you for saying that, Lance. Never!"

"Diane," he cried hoarsely, "you

must. Oh, my dear, I could cut my tongue out for hurting you so. Jealousy does strange things to men."

Her head lifted; gentle understanding filled her eyes. She smiled through misty tears, giving the effect of a sudden burst of sunshine defying the rain.

"And to women, Lance," she admitted.

"Then I'm forgiven?"

She stretched out impulsive hands toward him. "Of course. What would I do without you? I'd have no one to listen to my silly troubles. No one to run to when I needed advice—or help."

"Diane, you know I'd die to give you one small second of happiness."

She sat up very straight, changing the subject abruptly. "Lance, as assistant prosecuting attorney, couldn't you arrest Harry Treen for running a gambling game in his night club?"

"Haven't we tried to get him?" he demanded with a wry smile. "Somebody always tips him off to every intended raid. When we get there we find a nice, quiet group playing bridge. And Harry gives us what is known as the razzberry."

She said in a small voice: "I just wanted to protect Mat. If Harry's club was closed, Cora Jacobs would go away. I'm losing him to her, and I can't bear it!"

"Don't you realize, Diane, that after Cora it will always be somebody else?"

"I can't believe that." She smiled suddenly, and with visible effort. "Let's forget my worries for a while. Lance, did you know that Mr. Richards doesn't intend to run for prosecuting attorney at the spring elections? He told Aunt Amy that you would get the office."

He met her mood with eager response. "That's been my big am-

bition—to take his place when he was ready to retire."

"You've a brilliant political future to look forward to. I'm so proud and happy for you, dear."

They kept to safe subjects on the homeward drive. Lance said good night at the gate and drove away. With lagging steps, Diane walked up the path and mounted the stairs to the porch.

Suddenly, like a jack-in-the-box, Mat Trowbridge leaped up from the deep comfort of a porch chair to confront her. His good-looking face was dark with anger, his voice bellicose. With a pang, Diane knew that he had been drinking again.

"Well," he snapped, "it's about time you got home. I've been waiting here for over an hour. Your aunt wouldn't ask me inside."

Diane wanted to laugh. It was like Aunt Amy to lock Mat out because she disliked him as heartily as she adored Lance.

"Our date was for eight o'clock, not ten thirty," she reminded him, calm in the face of his anger.

He snarled: "You didn't waste any time accepting Lance's invitation when I didn't show up."

"Why should I? Am I supposed to sit at home in gentle patience and wait for the left-over crumbs of your company?"

He stalked across the porch and back again to stand squarely in front of her, his tall form blotting out the moonlight that filtered through wistaria vines.

"Well," he growled, running nervous fingers through his thick brown hair, "bawl me out for breaking our date and get it over with."

"You might have had the decency to phone me you weren't coming," she accommodated him.

His light-blue eyes shifted to a

point over her head. He moistened thin lips with quick flicks of his tongue.

"I—I had to work late and didn't get time."

The fact that he expected her to accept this worn-out excuse, angered her far more than his deliberate lie.

"Why trouble to lie, Mat?" Her voice was low, matching the down-curve of her trembling lips. "You were with Cora."

"What if I was? Weren't you with Lance?" he demanded.

"It's not the same thing," she argued heatedly. "Lance is my oldest and dearest friend. Cora is——"

He broke in, taking a threatening step forward: "You leave Cora out of this!"

A sob caught in her throat, stung her eyes with hot tears. She turned away, making a move to leave him. He caught her shoulders, swinging her around to face him.

"I—I'm sorry, Diane," he apologized, every vestige of anger wiped from his face.

He was a penitent little boy again, begging the forgiveness she couldn't deny him because she loved him more than any one else in the world.

He grinned, looking foolish and a little ashamed. "I guess I had a drink too many. But a fellow ought to be able to celebrate his good fortune and be forgiven. I gave Harry Treen two hundred dollars to put on a race for me. He——"

"Two hundred dollars!" she gasped, gripping his arm with tense fingers. "Where did you get that much money, Mat?"

Taken off guard, he stammered, shifted nervously: "I—why—I—I had it," he finished lamely.

"That's not true! You've been borrowing money between pay days. Oh, Mat, you didn't—I mean, again?"

He adopted an injured tone that was a confession. "You haven't much faith in me."

"How can I? You've broken every promise you ever made me. I was so sure you wouldn't hurt me again; I've bragged that you wouldn't to Aunt Amy and Lance. It just isn't in you to be honest and self-respecting. You'd rather gamble and run around with people like Harry Treen and Cora Jacobs. Oh, go away. I despise you!"

She sank down into the big chair and looked up at him, tragedy in her golden-brown eyes. He came and perched on the arm, his fingers rumpling her hair. By sheer force of will she kept from reaching up and entwining eager arms about his neck.

"You're angry at me, Diane, because you're jealous of Cora. You know you love me; you'll always be mine, darling, no matter what I do. Even if I said I didn't love you."

Every nerve in her body trembled at his touch. He laughed, tilting her head back with a finger tucked under her chin, experimenting with light, teasing kisses that were delight and pain.

Suddenly she rose in one swift movement and walked to the edge of the porch. From there she looked through a veil of moonlight toward Silver Lake, stretching away in the distance in an unbroken sheet. And at twinkling stars of light that nestled at the base of a hilly road and were lamplit windows of Fern-dale's new residential district.

Only one short month ago, she and Mat had driven out to the lake for a picnic supper. They had stopped on the way to inspect the newest bungalow. A Spanish one, pink-stuccoed, its tiny patio screened by pepper vines.

Mat's tenderness that night had



"You're angry with me, Diane, because you're jealous of Cora," Mat said. "You know you love me; you'll always be mine, darling, no matter what I do. Even if I said I didn't love you."

spread a thrilling vision to her imagination. Breakfasts together in the tiny nook that captured warm morning sunlight. Herself in the shining white kitchen, cooking the

things he liked. Dinner at a candle-lit table, and long evenings of cozy, intimate talk, the world locked outside.

Mat had truly loved her then, be-

fore the coming of Cora. A thought hammered persistently in her brain. She turned to face him. Summoning all her composure, she asked a question, and held her breath waiting for his answer.

"Are you in love with Cora, Mat?"

"Good heavens! Do I have to be in love with every woman I happen to admire?"

She persisted. "You're evading the question."

He preened a bit, watching her through narrowed blue eyes.

"I find her attractive. I'm not the kind of man you can keep in a handbox, if that's what you want to know."

Diane stared at him. Icy finger tips dug deep into hot, moist palms. She wanted to run to him, to throw her arms about him protectingly, as a shield against the insidious fascination of women like Cora.

"Why are you like this, Mat?" she cried, in terrible fear of losing him. He grinned; her head jerked back challengingly. "You can't go on humiliating me before my friends, cheapening our love by attention to women like Cora, who's in love with Harry Treen and is used by him to lure men to his club."

Mat rose quickly and advanced toward her.

"Your jealousy may be flattering, Diane, but, frankly, it bores me. Marna Jerrod found that out, and others before her."

"You asked me to marry you; I have a right to expect your fidelity," she argued.

"I've asked a dozen girls the same thing, only they didn't take it literally, shout it out to the crowd, as you did. You must admit, Diane, that it was pretty decent of me to save your face."

"You mean you don't love me?"

"I mean," he replied brutally, "that I fell under the spell of moonlight and a pretty girl, as I have scores of times before. Then I saw that winning you would hurt Lance. I've always hated his smug respectability; he's always hated my free-and-easy manner of living. If it's any satisfaction, you may as well know I've come closer to loving you than any girl I've ever known. You might have held me, if you'd been less of a prig. I'm a modern man; I want a modern girl."

"Oh, Mat!"

The heartbroken cry tore from her lips and fluttered upward, like a wounded bird struggling to take wing. Suddenly a cold, deadly rage filled her. It turned to self-loathing because, even now, in the face of his confession, she couldn't hate him as he deserved. Pride forced her unwilling lips to say:

"Please go, Mat. And never come here again."

With a swift gesture she pulled his ring from her finger, feeling as though her heart were being torn from her. She pressed it into his hand, ran across the porch, and slammed the door shut between them. Behind its barrier, she slid to the floor, a crumpled heap of sobbing misery.

The news of Diane's broken engagement got about as such news always does. She kept curiosity alive by refusing to see her friends, in deadly fear of their questioning. How could she tell them that Mat had jilted her, had never meant to marry her?

In the long week that followed, she tortured herself with thoughts of Mat and Cora laughing together over her stupid, blundering belief that his kisses and wild declarations of love had meant a proposal of mar-

riage. She hated Mat; despised herself. She pitied herself; wanted Mat back with a fierce longing that drove her to the telephone a dozen times. But she always hung up before he had time to answer.

Her aunt tried to joggle her out of this dangerous mood.

"You're a fool, Diane," she insisted. "I may have raised you from a baby, but now I wonder if it was worth the trouble. Stop behaving like a mournful dog at the grave of its master, and act like a girl with some backbone."

The arguments had no effect on Diane. Then Lance stepped in and took matters into his own hands. He practically carried her away to have lunch with him at a popular tea room, where she was most likely to meet her friends.

"You can't become a nun simply because Mat ran out on you," he insisted. "When he gets over this silly infatuation for Cora, he'll come crawling back to you."

She shook her head, unconvinced. "He said horrible things to me. I can never forgive him."

"Sure, you can. He'll find out he can't live without you, and he'll say so. It's surprising how quickly all this will be forgotten and forgiven."

She smiled weakly.

He cautioned quickly: "Send up the colors, Diane. Here comes Maude Miller, with Marty Treadwell in tow."

"Oh, Diane," Maude cried, "is it true——"

Marty nudged her to silence. He grinned at Diane.

"Coming to the club dance tonight?" he asked.

"I'm taking her," Lance put in.

"Mat is taking Cora Jacobs," Maude declared loudly, drawing attention to their table. "Larry Trent

told me he has taken her some place every night this week."

Several more of Diane's friends stopped by their table for a friendly chat. Every one behaved exactly as they always had done. Diane suddenly decided that she loved life. And Lance, because he always made everything right for her.

She arrived rather late with Lance at the club dance that night. The moment she entered the crowded dressing room, a hush fell, warning her that she had been the subject under discussion.

With a gay smile and greeting for every one, she started the ball of conversation rolling again. But Maude's inordinate curiosity forced it against a snag.

"Diane," Maude wanted to know, planting herself directly behind Diane and meeting her reflected gaze in the mirror, "did you break your engagement with Mat, or did he?"

Diane fought down a feeling of panic, knowing that every eye in the room was on her.

"I suppose it was mutual, Maude."

"Well, why did you do it?"

Marna Jerrod, Mat's flame before Diane had taken his fancy, laughed loudly.

"The reason," she said with exaggerated slowness, "is a red-headed woman. Diane had found out that even wise girls who demand wedding rings with their romance, can't hold men like Mat."

A stark silence gripped the room. Diane turned deathly pale; her knees wobbled crazily. She didn't answer, pretending to be busily absorbed in rearranging the full, graceful skirt of her primrose-yellow organza gown. She stared into the mirror with unseeing eyes, touched the cloth with unfeeling fingers. Her

one thought was to escape before she burst into tears.

Head high, she mumbled something about not keeping Lance waiting, and left the room.

The music began a gay number before she joined Lance. Slipping into his arms, she moaned:

"Lance, I can't stay here. Marna

——" She stopped, swallowing the lump in her throat. In a small voice that he had to bend his dark head to hear, she told him what had happened.

"Of course, you'll stay," he said firmly. "And you'll act exactly as though nothing had happened."

Then, unbelievably, Mat cut in.

"May I finish this with you, Diane?" he asked.

She looked up into Lance's eyes. His look said: "Steady!"

"Do you mind, Lance?" She left the decision to him.

Mat bridled. "Of course he doesn't mind."

Lance smiled at him with aggravating coolness. "The question was addressed to me. No, Diane, go ahead and play mud pies."

There was no mistaking his meaning, nor the look of hatred he gave Mat. Mat pretended not to see it, and danced away with Diane.

He said: "Glad to see me, dear?"

"Why not?" she laughed up at him, her heart quickening its beat.

His arm tightened about her. Against her will, she remembered the feel of his lips on hers. Then Cora Jacobs brushed past them,

dancing with Marty Treadwell. She looked ravishingly beautiful in a hard, brilliant way. The daring cut of her sea-green satin gown revealed every curve of her alluring form.

"Darling," Mat whispered, "I'm beginning to realize that I made a terrible mistake. A man can't forget a girl like you. You're lovely, so fresh and sweet, Diane."

Looking up at him, she caught a strange gleam in his eyes. Realization came to her in a blinding flash. Mat loved the thrill of the chase. Had she been clever enough to keep him dangling, letting him feel free and never sure of her, he would still be in love with her. The normal longing to wholly possess the man she loved, had blunted his desire. Now that he had escaped the trap of marriage, he wanted to begin all over again.

"Diane," he pleaded, "meet me outside after this next dance?"

"Don't be silly; of course I won't!"

"You will! Because you still love me. Darling!"

The moment the dance ended she escaped to the veranda. The cool night air felt soothing on her hot cheeks. From a secluded spot in the shadows she watched couples arm in arm steal away into the garden.

Suddenly the low murmur of voices close by awakened her interest.

"Darling," the man said, "I'm jealous of the very moonlight that touches you."

"Dear boy!" came the woman's response.



The man was Mat; the woman Cora Jacobs. Before her stricken eyes could squeeze shut, blotting them from her vision, Diane saw Mat take Cora in his arms, saw her quick response to his caress.

When she opened her eyes again, they had gone. She left her hide-away and crept down into the garden, longing to escape from the sound of music and gay laughter. How could any girl, she lashed out in fury at herself, love a man as cheap and despicable as Mat had proved himself to be? With the plea for her to meet him still on his lips, he had taken Cora's kisses!

Blinded by tears, she started to run down the path, and bumped with hearty force against an unsteady masculine form.

"Gosh, Diane, it's you," Paul Matson gurgled. "Have you seen Marna? She promised to meet me here and park for a dance or two in the old bus."

He staggered on wobbly legs, caught at Diane's arm for support. Silly, drunken chuckles of amusement slithered off his lips.

"I tell you, Diane, there ain't no truth in women. I been waiting here for an hour. Women are the worms in the garden of life." He giggled, wagging his fingers under his nose. "'Magine calling Marna a worm. But she is; a nice, sleeky worm, the kind that 'nobody-loves-me' men like."

"I guess," Diane said, enlightened, "that's the kind of girl who has all the fun and never gets hurt."

"Sure 'tis." He swayed, lost his balance and threw flailing arms about her. "Gosh, Diane, you're little. And sweet." He whispered: "Let's go park some place, honey."

Why not? Why not be the type of girl men seemed to admire? She

had been made to believe that men liked girls sweet and sincere. She had one word expressive of that belief now. "Hooley!"

Paul took the word as low-spoken consent. He held her tight, his hot mouth seeking the cool sweetness of her lips.

Suddenly horror filled her. Horror for the thoughts that had made possible his revolting embrace. She fought to be free; he laughed, thinking it a jolly game well worth playing.

"Let me go!" she cried, straining back in his arms, jerking her head from side to side to escape his lips on her own.

The next instant she was torn from his embrace. Lance was protecting her, his arm about her shoulders.

"I ought to knock you down for this, Paul. I would, if you weren't drunk."

"It's my fault," Diane admitted honestly. "I told him he could, then changed my mind."

Lance stared down at her in amazed disbelief. He tucked his hand inside her arm and led her back to the clubhouse veranda.

"Why did you do it, Diane?" he asked when they had reached a shadowy corner at the far end.

It was a heavenly spot, patterned with moonlight that filtered through climbing vines of yellow ramblers. The music lent enchantment, and went to her head like wine.

"Maybe because I thought it didn't matter," she answered. Then, softly: "Or perhaps, deep in my heart, I was lonely."

Over his shoulder, she caught a glimpse of a man coming around the corner of the porch. For one fleeting second, the oblong of light from a window fell full upon him as he

passed through it. It was Mat, coming to keep their rendezvous.

A fierce desire to show him how little he meant to her, jerked her into swift movement. She'd let him see her give Lance the kisses he had expected.

Without a thought as to the effect of her decision on Lance, she swung very close to him. He stared down at her for one bewildered moment. Her lovely face was a white blur in the moonlight, her eyes drawing him like a magnet, and her scarlet lips tempting his caresses. His arms went about her, drawing her close.

"Diane!" he murmured huskily.

Their lips met in a kiss that branded itself forever on her heart. She forgot Mat, forgot everything but the thrilling ecstasy of Lance's mouth drinking in the sweetness of her lips.

For that one exquisite moment, she was a part of him. The mad pounding of her heart kept time with his own. They strained toward each other in sweet, passionate longing that held their lips locked in an endless kiss.

Then he released her. She stepped back, staring over his shoulder, remembering, and now wanting to forget the thing that had prompted her to go into Lance's arms.

He turned, following her eyes, and saw Mat swing through the brilliant glare of light from the window.

"Diane," he cried accusingly, quivering hurt in his dark eyes. "You knew Mat was there. You let me kiss you to make him jealous."

She had no defense, because it was true. Nor could she explain to him now the emotion that had stirred her to the depths of her being as she lay in his arms. There were no words to describe it. Only one thing

she was sure of; she would give her life to wipe that awful look of pain from his white face.

The silence that fell between them lasted all the way home. He said good night, leaving her to stare after him in heartbroken misery and despair.

The next day Ferndale buzzed with excited gossip. Mat Trowbridge was arrested. He had been caught passing out counterfeit money at the bank.

"I always knew he'd come to a bad end," Aunt Amy said when she read the news aloud to Diane at the breakfast table.

Diane didn't wait to finish breakfast. She hurried into a smart green-and-white sports suit with a matching knitted beret, and went to the jail to see Mat.

"Oh, Diane," he cried, clinging to her hands as to a refuge, "you've got to believe I didn't know what I was doing."

"How did it happen, Mat?" she asked quietly, feeling only pity for his misery.

"I borrowed five thousand dollars from the bank last week to place a bet. Harry gave me his word that I'd win. I did, and put back every cent of it. Then, two days ago, he got another hot tip. I took ten thousand dollars this time. And won. But, Diana, he never placed those bets. It was a trick to get good money and pay me back with counterfeit bills!"

"Mat!" It was a horrified cry.

"Cora made me think Harry was my friend. She's his wife, Diane. But how can I prove anything against them? Help me!" He dropped to his knees, burying his face in her skirt, clinging to her with heavy arms that dragged her down beside him.



"Let me go!" she cried, straining back in Paul's arms, jerking her head from side to side to escape his lips on her own. The next instant she was torn from his embrace. Lance was protecting her.

She struggled to her feet, helping him to rise. Mat began to laugh wildly.

"Can't you see the irony of it, Diane? Lance will prosecute the case.

He'll send me to prison for years! It's his chance at revenge, and he'll take it."

The blood froze in her veins. It was true! Lance would prosecute

Mat. There wasn't a lawyer in Ferndale who could win against him. None ever had.

"You won't desert me, Diane?" Mat pleaded when she was ready to leave. "I've been a cad, but I do love you, darling. I knew it the moment I saw you in Lance's arms last night. When I'm free—if I'm given another chance—I swear I'll make good and make you love me all over again."

"You will be, Mat," she pacified him.

"And you'll marry me?"

"We'll talk of that later," she replied gently.

Thirty minutes later, she faced Lance in his office.

"You've come about Mat," he said tonelessly and without preamble. "I warn you, it's my duty to prosecute him."

She came close, looking up at him, trying to read some sign of weakening in his stern face. Her eyes were wet with tears.

"You can't do it, Lance. You'd hate yourself as long as you lived."

"I've no choice. If I refused, the people would say that I placed personal feeling above duty. It has never been said of me, and I won't start it now."

"You have a choice," she insisted. "You can resign from office and defend Mat."

He stared at her, speechless for a long moment. Then, in a voice that clarified the pain her words had brought him, he said: "You're asking me to give up my future, the chance to take Mr. Richards's place as prosecuting attorney, to save Mat? In the face of all he has made you suffer, you can ask that?" His voice dropped to a whisper. "How you must love him!"

Then he turned to her in blind

fury, struck out to ease the pain in his heart.

"How can you dare come here and ask this of me?"

"Because," she said softly, "I've always come to you when I was in trouble. I've no one else to turn to now. Oh, Lance, you will do this for me?"

"Yes," he cried, beaten. "I'll do it because I love you, and, loving you, I must save Mat."

Lance resigned immediately from office. He took Mat's case. By putting Harry Treen on the stand and submitting him to a grueling cross-examination, he exposed the ugly truth, proving Harry's intention to use Mat's weakness to pass out counterfeit money. By his brilliant summing up at the end of the trial, he got Mat off without a sentence, the bank having withdrawn charges on the return of its money.

Late that evening, Diane rang the bell of Lance's apartment. They faced one another in his plainly furnished library. He was the first to speak.

"I don't want your thanks, Diane."

"I didn't come here to thank you, Lance."

"Then, perhaps you came to offer your congratulations because Mr. Richards has insisted upon reinstating me in my former position. Or to rejoice because the citizens of Ferndale have been barraging me with joyous acclaim, promising me the prosecutor's office next spring. It seems that I've become the local hero. I should thank you."

"I have no credit coming for what you did. I may have hastened your action, but you were bound to do it because you're fine and good."

"You flatter me," he said, bowing ironically. "Now please say what you came for, and go."

She looked at him, a dewy softness in her eyes. He took a step toward her and stopped, clenching his hands in an effort not to touch her. He groaned, throwing a hand across his eyes:

"Please go, before——" He stopped.

"Before what?" Diane prompted, deliberately tempting him as she swayed toward him. "Before you stop acting like a blind, silly fool and see the truth? Oh, Lance, don't you know even now?"

"What are you saying?" he cried, hands hard on her shoulders, dark eyes burning passionately into hers.

"That I love you. That I've always loved you. I never really knew until the night you kissed me, held me in your arms. I did only want to hurt Mat at first. But I forgot all that in your first kiss."

"Then why did you ask me to help Mat, if you didn't love him?"

"Because I had to make you prove to yourself what a grand person you are. Because I felt such pity for Mat—he has learned that he does love me, Lance, but I've forgotten the moonlight madness between us. Oh, Lance, come and take me before I show you how bold and unmaidenly I can be."

"Diane! My beloved!"

He gathered her close in his arms. Her own tightened about his neck, and her lips lifted to his in eager surrender.

"Darling! Tell me you love me," she pleaded tenderly.

He did, but not with words. His lips closed down on hers, and as she thrilled again to his fierce, passionate kiss, Diane knew that at last she had found perfect happiness.



AFTER THE HIKE

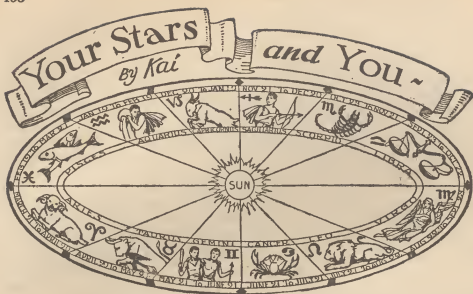
DOWN from the hills where the world was singing,

We have come home to our valley place;
And all of the sunlight, all of the music,
All of the woodland's color and grace
Are living still in your smile-sweet face.

And good it is in the blue of evening,
When sunlight vanishes down the west,
To seek your hand and to lead you gently
Into our valley home, and rest—
Just as the hill birds come to nest.

To find in the candle's tiny moonlight
All of the bright day's gold and blue,
All of the bird-song, all of the wind-kiss,
All of the wild rose scent and dew—
Sealed in the kiss and the arms of you!

BERT COOKSLEY.



YOUR WEEK

The evening holds many uncomfortable interludes and reactions. But, in spite of the hectic experiences, there is enough stability and restrictions to insure your not getting into trouble, if you use any degree of caution. In view of the fact that Monday is a holiday, and because of certain negative planetary influences, very little can be accomplished until Wednesday, which is an excellent business day. Do not concentrate too much upon your emotions this week and in taking the pleasant experiences in your stride, use caution and restraint. Convert your tempestuous desires into energy which can be utilized for accomplishment and advancement.

DAY BY DAY

Hours mentioned are Eastern standard time

Saturday,
November
9th

♂

The morning is speedy in tempo until 10:00 a. m., with a reckless, eccentric undercurrent. After that the trend is quieter and you can expect restriction and delays around 11:00 a. m. The afternoon is light in tone and all inclinations until midnight will be toward pleasure, recreation, and affectional interests.

Sunday,
November
10th

☺

Here is an enjoyable day personally, extending to 7:00 p. m. The afternoon should be particularly pleasant for

Monday,
November
11th

♂

relations with your fellow man, although your processes of thought will be slightly on the negative side. The evening brings action and energy, and a slightly belligerent attitude, but the emotions quiet down after 10:30 p. m. There was a Full Moon this morning at 9:43 a. m.

Armistice Day: General excitement pervades most of the hours until 7:30 p. m. The morning is pleasant and relaxing but takes on a more active, militant tone around 10:00 a. m. The noon period is quiet and restrained, but 1:00 p. m. brings mental excitement and increased energy. The evening is quiet, practical and restrained and plans should be made for your material welfare.

Tuesday,
November
12th

♂

A vague, uncertain attitude will be felt this morning until 11:00 a. m. The noon period is adaptable to pleasant relationships and social mingling. The afternoon hours bring mental acceleration, attention to business, the tendency to speak sharply and a restraint in sentiment. This restriction of your emotions extends to the evening and past mid-

night, so do not expect anything but quiet pastimes to-night.

Wednesday,
November
13th

♈

Here is an excellent business day. You will be energetic all day and will be able to handle practical and material affairs efficiently. The evening is quiet and you will be concerned mostly with serious thought and financial considerations. Make this a productive day.

Thursday,
November
14th

♏

Caution should be exercised this morning in handling all affairs and especially in controlling your temper. The afternoon brings routine and more emphasis upon the sentiments than anything else. The evening is quiet until 9:00 p. m. and most of us will be fatigued. The late-evening hours are mildly satisfactory.

Friday,
November
15th

♏

To-day is not unfavorable and the results depend mostly upon your ability to recognize and seize opportunities. There is no outstanding indication that you will be efficient or productive, except for your individual capacity to work and operate efficiently. The early-evening hours are expansive but mildly enjoyable, and the hours around midnight too hectic and restless for comfort.



IF YOU WERE BORN BETWEEN

March 21st and April 20th

(Aries ♈)

—Aries people born between March 21st and 28th will begin to feel beneficial rays from the planets at this time and will find opportunities coming in their direction. Decisions will have to be made by the changes necessary to your stabilizing your financial conditions. You have the cooperation of the planets for almost any trend of action you may desire. If born between April 2nd and 12th, uncertain health conditions are indicated and you should be careful how you indulge yourself in the pleasures of living.

April 20th and May 21st

(Taurus ♉)

—Taurians born between April 20th and 27th will be restless, but the desire for change is good and you will be able to stabilize your existence. This is an energetic week for you and there is more of a sober foundation and progress than you have enjoyed in some time in the past. Do everything you can to advance your interests. If born between May 3rd and 10th, the period is slightly negative, but your intuition will be increased and your mind will be creative. Affectional affairs will be stimulated.

May 21st and June 21st

(Gemini ♊)

—Geminians born between May 21st and 28th will have fresh responsibilities about their jobs, their associates and financial affairs. Money will be tied up because of unexpected drains upon your surplus. It is a pleasant week socially and emotionally and this group will be busy in their work and able to make keen decisions. If born between June 3rd and 12th, it is a vague and uncertain period, with a minimum amount of pleasure and recreation and unstable domestic conditions. There is very little tangible action in connection with home affairs.

June 21st and July 21st

(Cancer ♋)

—Cancerians born between June 21st and 28th will have pleasant home conditions this week and will be occupied a great part of their time with their affectional affairs. Changes in connection with friends will occur and you will be inclined to quarrel with business associates. However, working conditions as far as your job is concerned will improve and health adjustments will be favorable to your physical well-being. If born between July 3rd and 12th, you will feel inspirational and creative and if engaged in artistic or literary work you will find your imagination stimulated.

July 21st and August 22nd

(Leo ♌)

—Leo people born between July 21st and 28th will have to make decisions about home affairs this week, will be inclined to be restless and dissatisfied with developments in their public life and should watch their health at this time. Your emotional and affectional life will be stimulated and new interests will enter your life. If born between August 3rd and 12th you will have

uncertain financial and income conditions and will not use your best judgment. In view of the fact that you have new opportunities in the future, it would be wise to be practical and more conservative.

August 22nd and September 23rd
(Virgo ♍)

—Virgo people born between August 22nd and 29th are entering an important period. There will be changes, a new forcefulness and you will be able to adjust relations with relatives. Home conditions will improve and you will find your viewpoint more expansive and your days full from an enjoyment standpoint. It is still a vague, uncertain time for you, if born between September 4th and 14th. Care must be taken of the health, impractical schemes avoided and quiet, sober thinking should invade your entire consciousness. Live as conservatively as possible.

September 23rd and October 22nd
(Libra ♎)

—Librans born between September 23rd and October 1st will have a pleasant personal week, more enjoyment than usual, a more expansive and philosophical frame of mind and the ability to be expressive in connection with artistic or literary work. This is a week for you to make decisions about your income and the expenditure of moneys. If born between October 4th and 12th, you will enjoy a mild affectional life, are likely to be idealistic in love affairs and are not exercising the most practical judgment at this time. Keep your feet on the ground.

October 22nd and November 21st
(Scorpio ♏)

—Scorpio people born between October 22nd and 29th can expect changes and readjustments in connection with partners and the elimination of old conditions. It is a good money-making period for the above group and a time to make important decisions. If born between November 3rd and 11th, you must choose your friends carefully, watch out for deception in your private life and engage in no scheme which might deplete your surplus funds.

November 21st and December 20th
(Sagittarius ♐)

—Sagittarians born between November 21st and 28th will begin to feel some of the beneficial rays from the planets, which have been denied them for some time.

Home conditions will continue to be restricted and you must do nothing that is injurious to your health, but even though finances are hampered temporarily, be practical, keep your eye on the future and create the foundation for future prosperity. If born between December 2nd and 11th, you must be more careful than ever about allowing yourself to be drawn into schemes and impractical ventures. Be as cautious as possible and do not believe everything you hear.

December 20th and January 19th
(Capricorn ♑)

—Capricorn people born between December 20th and 27th have a hectic week and a period when the emotions will get out of control easily. It is a time, too, when you will have many experiences and make changes in the affectional department of your life. This week brings you fresh contacts and new friends. A more stable undercurrent is running through your life, too. It is not a particularly important time, if born between January 2nd and 11th. Most of your reactions will be sentimental ones and your efficiency depends upon your personal application to the job at hand.

January 19th and February 19th
(Aquarius ♒)

—Aquarians born between January 19th and 26th have many new interests entering their life at this time and there will be opportunities to make fresh contacts and improve general conditions. This is a pleasant and favorable seven days for you. If born between February 2nd and 11th, you will have to be careful how you choose your friends at this time and must watch for deception from this quarter. The financial affairs of your associates will perplex you, too, but you will be unable to adjust the situation to your complete satisfaction.

February 19th and March 21st
(Pisces ♓)

—Pisceans born between February 19th and 26th will be inclined to break up old conditions and that is a good idea. You can readjust your public and business life and no opportunity should be neglected. This is an exceptionally energetic week for you and you will be able to make keen decisions. It is a very active week generally and you should make every effort to work efficiently. If born between March 4th and 11th, you will continue to have confusing and uncertain experiences with partners and associates, and it would be wise not to en-

ter into new partnerships. Your judgment is faulty under these present circumstances.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★
★ THE STAR QUESTION BOX ★
★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

MR. C. Z. Z., born January 29, 1917, Oklahoma, 11:45 p. m.: Your chart indicates a strong mechanical tendency and the ability to succeed in that type of work. You did not state in your letter whether this new job relates to mechanics or not, but that is what you should be doing. You are entering a period now when all conditions will improve for you and there is every indication that you should obtain the position.

"MISSIE," born December 25, 1913, New York, 8:00 p. m.: You will have an opportunity to marry in 1938, at which time your planetary conditions are favorable for forming a matrimonial alliance. I was glad to have your letter and welcome one of my regular readers. I would like to tell you, though, that you are a very sensitive person and if you ever tried to correct a fault, you should control your morbid tendencies.

Miss J. P., born April 7, 1914, Illinois, 5:00 p. m.: It would be better for you to wait until 1939 before considering marriage. The responsibilities you would have to assume before that year would be very irksome to you and interfere with the possibility of your making a permanent affair of it.

Miss M. B. H., born September 11, 1920, Idaho, 3:30 a. m.: You should discard the idea of acting or doing anything in connection with the stage. You are at the age when every young girl has a yen to be an actress, and you should be thinking about a more practical career. I like the idea of art for you and believe you would be an excellent designer. Suggest you study either costume designing or fit yourself to create children's play dresses, or if you go into the commercial world, deal with garments for offices and factory wear.

"Miss Dodo," born June 26, 1901, Connecticut, 8:00 a. m.: You are a gentle, sensitive and introspective person and will always feel your responsibility keenly, especially where your mother is concerned. I cannot see you doing anything for the

next few years except taking care of your mother. You will marry later in life, probably in 1939.

MISS N. E. L. J., born January 24, 1920, North Dakota, 10:52 a. m.: You have a sense of rhythm and balance, a fair and just outlook upon life; are good-natured and will be able to derive benefit through exercising your ingenuity and applying yourself to life's problems. You would do well in beauty culture work or you might be a nurse to children. An excellent year for you is 1938, at which time there will be a general improvement in your affairs—as a matter of fact, this improvement begins in 1936—and the opportunity to marry.

N. L., born November 18, 1882, New York, 6:00 p. m.: There is great harmony and a blending of temperament between you and the person whose chart you sent me. As both of you have matrimonial influences at this time and continue to have throughout the winter months, I would not be surprised to have you write me that this marriage has been consummated. I advise it.

"MISS BOBBY," born June 12, 1918, New Mexico, 2:00 p. m.: You are a mental person with tact and an unusual amount of balance. I am sure teaching is not particularly acceptable to you at this time, but you would make an excellent teacher of any of the arts. Have you ever thought of teaching folk-dancing to children? I am so glad to have heard from you and greet you as one of my regular readers. Sorry not to have been able to answer you as soon as you desired.

Miss M. B. W., born January 19, 1918, California, 12:40 p. m.: There is no great reason why you cannot go through with this marriage, except that both of you will have to adjust your temperaments to each other. Of course, when there is a physical contact such as both of you have and close harmony of interests, it is possible to make this adjustment. Frankly, I believe you are more settled and stronger than this young man, but your gentleness would be of great assistance. He is interested in human nature as it exists, according to his chart and you may be able to make a success of marriage. Furthermore, your chart indicates marriage this year, but I cannot tell much about his immediate matrimonial indications without his hour of birth. Hope my unavoidable delay in answering you has not hampered your decision.

"BARE," born January 26, 1915, West Virginia, 6:00 a. m.: You will not have to wait as long as you think for marriage. You will have an opportunity for an alliance in 1938. But I think you will develop more around your thirtieth year. Next year will hold planetary influences for you which will decrease your shyness and aid you in having confidence in men. For the past three years your gentleness and shyness have been handicapping, but you will outgrow that as you become older. You are a dreamer, an idealist and slightly negative, and domesticity is your best medium of expressing yourself.

MISS E. T. W., born September 20, 1914, Pennsylvania, midnight: You are subject to fits of restlessness and impatience and I believe child-nursing would get on your nerves. However, you have an inherent maternal instinct which would assist you in the handling of children, applicable more so to your own rather than those belonging to another person. Your chart indicates you are fitted for office work or a connection with a department store. Hence, I suggest you return to school and undertake a commercial course. I believe it would be better for you to stay with your sister than return to your home town.

L. V. J., born January 12, 1918, Massachusetts, 4:20 p. m.: You have a sense of rhythm, versatility, cleverness, shrewdness, and a sense of the commercial. Whether or not you would make a success of singing over the radio is problematical. I really think you would be better doing dialogue over the air, but my choice for you would be in photographic lines. Your being able to create the medium for fulfilling this expectation is something I do not know, of course. That is the suggestion, however.

MISS L. V. H., born March 19, 1916, New York, 5:10 p. m.: It seems to me you have a most interesting type of work and I see no reason why you should change it. If you wish to further your career it is an excellent idea to undertake an advanced course in art. Your letter interested me very much. Naturally, I know that there is such a thing as painting artificial fish, but yours is the first letter I have received

from any one actually doing the work. In my opinion, you are in the right line of work, but it does no harm to continue studying and progressing gradually. As far as a marriage for you is concerned: There is a strong indication for marriage for you in the fall of 1939. By that time you will have overcome some of your negative qualities and your shyness with men. You have the quality to be honest emotionally and you will be glad if you wait for the right person. I assure you if you are patient, the right person will appreciate you.

MISS B. K. B., born January 1, 1891, noon, Iowa: It would be better for you to wait until 1939 before remarrying. Frankly, I see no connection between your chart and that of the man you give except a deep friendship. There is great conflict between the charts when it concerns a permanent, marital alliance. I do not advise your marrying him.



WHY QUESTIONS ARE NOT ANSWERED

Kai does not send answers by mail.

M. H. C., August 3, 1914: Your question was too general. What is the change you refer to?

MISS J. D., November 3, 1919, Texas: I must have the young man's birth data before I can answer you.

MISS M. L., October 16, 1905, Roumania: Your question was too general for me to give you a satisfactory answer. However, the days you are living now are the best that you Libra people have had in some time. Grasp every opportunity that comes your way. Make up your mind what you are going to do, then do it. If you will write again, being more explicit, I will try to help you.

MISS E. E., December 16, 1914, Montana: I must have the young man's birth data before I can answer you.

E. B., August 11, 1900, 9 p. m.: In order to answer all your questions it would be necessary for me to give you a complete horoscope reading—and space does not permit that. I cannot answer your question about the young man until I have his birth data.

Editor's Note: Questions for this department are answered only through Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine. Each reader is allowed to ask one question. Be sure to give the following data in your letter: date, month, year, and place of birth, the hour of the day or night, if possible, and sex. Address your letters to KAI, care of this magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.



The Friendliest Corner

by MARY MORRIS



Miss Mary Morris, who conducts this department, will see to it that you will be able to make friends with other readers, though thousands of miles may separate you. It must be understood that Miss Morris will undertake to exchange letters only between men and men, boys and boys, women and women, girls and girls. All reasonable care will be exercised in the introduction of correspondents. If any unsatisfactory letters are received by our readers, the publishers would appreciate their being sent to them. Please sign your name and address when writing. Be sure to inclose forwarding postage when sending letters through The Friendliest Corner, so that mail can be forwarded.

Address Miss Mary Morris, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

HERE'S a call from a young nurse who knows the value of true friendship. Day after day the human drama unfolds itself before her eyes. Her daily routine holds many varied interests she will be glad to share with you. So step right up, Pals, and claim her as your friend. You will find Big-city Jo sympathetic, warm-hearted, and understanding!

DEAR MISS MORRIS:

I'm twenty years old,
With brown eyes and brown hair,
Height over five feet,
And considered quite fair.
Nursing the sick takes up
A lot of my time;
I'll tell you about it,
If you drop me a line.

I'm an ardent athlete,
And very up to date;
I'll welcome long or short
Letters from any State.

Girls of twenty or more
Who want a true Pal,
Please write to this very
Lonesome New York gal.
BIG-CITY Jo.

Art and dance lovers, Illinois Flo
is the Pal for you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's hoping that Pen Pals everywhere will answer my plea. I'm a dark-haired, dark-eyed girl of eighteen, interested in art, dancing, sewing, and writing letters. I will gladly exchange letters and snapshots with girls of any age, so don't hesitate to write to me, Pals.

ILLINOIS FLO.

She'll tell you all about Nevada.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please print my plea for Pen Pals? I'm a young married woman very fond of writing long letters. I live in Nevada, and have lots of free time on my hands. I enjoy sports, dancing, music, movies, and horseback riding. I'll answer all letters, and will gladly tell you anything you want to know about this part of the country. Who'll be my first Pen Pal?
LOGANDALE B.

An amateur stamp collector.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man twenty-nine years of age, single, have plenty of time to write letters, and know many interesting facts about Canada. I enjoy sports, reading, and am an amateur stamp collector. Here's hoping that my plea will be answered by Pen Pals from far and near. I'll answer all letters promptly.

CANUCK.

Girls, here's just the Pal you've been looking for.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lonely New Hampshire girl, with brown hair and blue eyes. I enjoy hiking, sewing, swimming, making friends, writing long, chummy letters, and my hobby is collecting stamps. I'll exchange snapshots and stamps with any Pen Pal who is interested enough to answer my plea, and will gladly tell you all about myself in my first letters. Girls, age doesn't matter; write and let's be friends.

ORFORD PAL.

Interested in the sea? Then write to Cap's Wife.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you try to find some faithful Pen Pals for me? I'm a married woman thirty-seven years of age, and very lonely. My husband is captain of a tugboat and away from home most of the time. I live in Canada, collect picture post cards, and would like to exchange them with Pen Pals everywhere. Here's hoping that our postman will be loaded down with mail for me.

CAP'S WIFE.

Georgia Cracker is ready to write to every one.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I make a plea for lots of Pen Pals? I'm a girl twenty years of age, considered attractive, and dress nicely. I like skating, dancing, horseback riding, and am fond of all sports. I also enjoy reading, music, and writing letters. I'm ready to write to every one. Who'll take a chance on me?

GEORGIA CRACKER.

Veronica hopes to become an actress.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is an S O S for Pen Pals from all over the world. I am a teen-age high-school girl living in Ohio, am fond of sports, including horseback riding and swimming. My pet ambition is to become an actress. I'll exchange

snapshots with every one, and promise prompt and interesting replies to all letters. Girls, please write to me. I'll be waiting!

VERONICA.

A prospective journalist.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm another lonely young fellow interested in journalism. I would like to correspond with young fellows between sixteen and twenty-one years of age. I like dancing, outdoor sports, and have traveled a good deal. Here's hoping that I'll have lots of answers to my plea.

WASHINGTON DICK.

Hopeful May is interested in nursing.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't all you single and married Pen Pals between twenty and thirty years of age drop me a line? I'm a young girl in my early twenties, greatly interested in nursing, and hope to enter training soon. I have brown hair and eyes, a happy disposition, and am very easy to get along with. I'll be glad to tell you more about myself later. Who'll be my first Pen Pal?

HOPEFUL MAY.

Lonesome Shorty hails from an Ohio mining town.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May another lonesome girl enter your Corner? I am eighteen years old, enjoy sports, dancing, and music. I am also interested in airplanes. I live in a coal-mining town in Ohio, and promise to answer all letters. I hope to make real friends of my Pen Pals.

LONESOME SHORTY.

Melody Girl teaches Hawaiian music.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is an S O S for Pen Pals from a lonely French-Canadian girl living in Michigan. I'm seventeen, and teach Hawaiian music. I would like to correspond with girls everywhere, and especially those living in Hawaii, England, South America, Canada, and California. I promise to answer all letters promptly.

MELODY GIRL.

An Indian girl from Nova Scotia.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would any one care to write to an Indian girl living in Nova Scotia? I am twenty-two years old, enjoy all sports, and at present I am working away from home and get very lonesome.

LS-9B

Won't some of you young or old, married or single Pals please write to me? I'll tell you interesting facts abouts this part of the country, and more about myself in my first letter.

SCOTIA VEE.

New York City is her home town.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who'll exchange snapshots and souvenirs with a peppy thirteen-year-old girl? I have golden-brown hair, blue eyes, like swimming, and collect stamps. I'll be a loyal and sincere Pen Pal, and promise to answer all letters received. If you girls want to hear about New York City, just drop me a line, because that's my home town.

MILLIE KAY.

Lorain has lost her very best friend.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I wish some of the girls who read your Corner would take me for their Pen Pal. I'm a girl sixteen years of age, have lost my best friend, my mother, and now I am very lonely. I live in Ohio, like all sports, and my pet hobby is collecting pictures of screen stars. I will gladly exchange snapshots, and promise to answer all letters. I'm very good-natured, and easy to get along with.

LORAIN.

Aviation enthusiasts, write to Hopeful Ruby.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I join your Corner? I'm a girl of seventeen, very keen about flying, and would love to hear from girls who are interested in aviation. But that doesn't mean that I won't answer all letters received. Every one is welcome, and I'll exchange snapshots. Have lots of things to talk about. Please try me, girls.

HOPEFUL RUBY.

Shirley Ann guarantees prompt replies.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a regular reader of your Corner, and hope you will help me find a few Pen Pals. I'm a young married woman, have four children, and as my husband is away all day and part of the evening, I get very lonesome. We moved to a new neighborhood recently, and I hardly know any one. I enjoy cooking, sewing, and collect picture post cards. I'll answer all letters and guarantee prompt replies. I live in British Columbia.

SHIRLEY ANN.

A college man with varied interests.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I hope I'll be lucky enough to find at least one true Pal. I'm a young man twenty-six years of age, live in Pennsylvania, enjoy traveling, dancing, writing letters, horseback riding, and am also interested in chemistry. I'm a college graduate and hold a B. S. degree. I'll gladly exchange snapshots with any one.

THEODORE S.

Three Pals at a throw.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please print our plea for Pen Pals? We are three Oklahoma girls between fifteen and seventeen years of age. We like all sports, are peppy and jolly, and simply love to write long, chummy letters. We will exchange snapshots, and are sure that our letters will be friendly and interesting. Come one, come all!

WANDA, MARGE, AND CLEO.

Nard will answer any number of letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man interested in sports, but now that winter is near there will be plenty of time for writing letters, and I will gladly answer any number of them. I'm fond of the theater, playing cards, and as I recently lost a friend, I am very lonesome. I live in Mount Vernon, New York, and hope some of the boys in New York City will get in touch with me.

NARD.

Emilyn is an expert swimmer.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl eighteen years of age, fond of swimming, horseback riding, dancing, and have won several prizes in swimming contests. I will gladly tell you more about myself, and promise to exchange snapshots with every one. Girls, please don't disappoint me; I'm counting on you.

EMILYN.

This brother and sister are fond of music, art, and literature.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Would any one care to write to a brother and sister twenty and twenty-three years of age? We are very fond of music, art, literature, dancing, and all outdoor sports. We want to hear from every one, regardless of age or where they live. We'll exchange snapshots and answer all letters promptly.

BAES AND JACK.

Toots and Boots are counting on you, girls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two girls seventeen and eighteen years of age, enjoy all sports, particularly football and dancing. We want to hear from girls from all over the country, and promise prompt replies. Besides that, we will exchange photographs or snapshots. Come on, Pals; we'll do our best to make our letters interesting!

TOOTS AND BOOTS.

Married Pals, write to Prairie Mrs.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who wants to hear from a Texas Pal? I'm married, and the mother of three fine youngsters. I enjoy good shows, sewing, cooking, and making quilts. I want to hear from any one between twenty-five and forty years of age. I'll gladly exchange quilt patterns, and promise to send prompt replies to all letters. Come on, Pals, let's get busy

PRAIRIE MRS.

She hopes to take up nursing.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am not exactly lonely, but would like to correspond with girls from near and far. I'm a Tennessee girl of eighteen, have had one year of college, and am taking a business course. Later, I hope to go into training and become a nurse. I like tennis, dancing, horseback riding, swimming, and writing letters. Let's exchange snapshots, girls.

JESSE NELLE.

Clarksville Lloyd has traveled.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man twenty-three years of age, tall, blond, have traveled, and lived in many hotels. I'm a senior at a university, enjoy dancing, tennis, swimming, and horseback riding. I'll exchange snapshots with any one who is interested enough to write to me.

CLARKSVILLE LLOYD.

Another Pal who has seen something of the world.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Will you please help me find some Pen Pals? I'm a Spanish-Irish girl of sixteen, live in Canada, am interested in aviation, enjoy singing, dancing, and have traveled a lot for a girl my age. I'm sure my replies will be interesting, so here's hoping that some of you girls will send me a line or two.

TOBY B.

This "hello" girl enjoys reading mystery stories.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I enter your Corner? I'm a telephone operator, a girl twenty-four years of age, at present unemployed and very lonesome. I like the theater, dancing, and love to read good mystery stories. I want to hear from girls in or near New York City, although every one is welcome, and I promise to answer all letters received. I'll be seein' you!

JERSEY JACKIE.

Answer her call for high-school Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a New Orleans girl of seventeen, a high-school graduate, enjoy playing baseball, dancing, and would love to correspond with high-school girls everywhere. Come on, Pals, and let's get together. I have lots of things to tell you, and will not stop writing after the first letter.

ALPHEONINE.

This Pal has roamed all over the country.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man twenty-six years of age, enjoy reading, and like good music. I am sure Pen Pals would find my letters interesting. I have done considerable hitch-hiking, and have roamed all over the country. I've had lots of interesting adventures. At present I am living at home and working in a movie theater. Come on, boys, and write to me.

HALIFAX FRANK.

Fashion designing is this Pal's goal.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here's another S O S for Pen Pals. I'm a girl thirteen years of age, and want to correspond with girls everywhere. Any one between thirteen and sixteen is welcome. I'm fond of skating, swimming, collect pictures of movie stars, and my ambition is to become a fashion designer. I'll exchange snapshots and promise to answer all letters. Please try me, girls.

ELSIE R.

Janice of Illinois wants new friends.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a somewhat reserved girl of twenty-four, live in a small suburb near Chicago, like good shows, music, reading, dancing, swimming, skating, and am also interested in cooking and sew-

ing. I would love to have some new friends, and can tell you Pals many things about Chicago. I'm sure you will find my letters interesting. JANICE OF ILLINOIS.

Friendly Elsie has lots of news to tell you.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman of twenty-three, work in an office, and have lots of interesting things to talk about. I have a lovely little apartment, go places once in a while, and love to meet people and make friends. Girls everywhere, won't you give me a chance to be your friend? I'll exchange snapshots, and will send souvenirs to the first six Pen Pals who write to me. FRIENDLY ELSIE.

Get acquainted with Mrs. Donnie.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I think your Friendliest Corner is a fine way to make friends, and I would like some Pen Pals. I'm a young married woman twenty-one years of age. My husband is away from home most of the time, and I get very lonesome. Won't some of you single and mar-

ried Pals write to me? I'm considered a good pianist, and can tell you lots of interesting things about California.

MRS. DONNIE.

Omaha Pal is looking for understanding friends.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young man in my twenties, in search of understanding Pen Pals. I like good books, swimming, movies, and enjoy writing letters. At present I am working in an office in a large Western city, and would especially like to hear from Pen Pals in Nebraska and Omaha. I promise to answer all letters, and hope to hear from every one.

OMAHA PAL.

She wants Pals from France and Canada.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a teen-age girl in my last year of high school, have blond hair and blue eyes. My pet hobby is writing letters, and I hope that some of the Pen Pals in France and Canada will let me hear from them. Of course, every one is welcome, and the more letters I receive, the

**HOT
HOLLYWOOD
NEWS**

STREET & SMITH'S
PICTURE PLAY
15c

15c

MONTHLY **ALL NEWS STANDS**

better I will like it. I'll answer every one promptly. Don't hesitate to write, girls. I'll be anxiously waiting to hear from you.

ESTHER W.

Ricky is somewhat homesick.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young fellow of twenty, came to Rhode Island from Colorado two years ago, and am often lonesome. I like sports, dancing, movies, swimming, and especially writing letters. I want to hear from boys of any age, and from all over the country. I'll exchange snapshots, and will be a true Pal.

RICKY.

She's full of pep and good humor.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a teen-age girl living in the Philippine Islands, go to high school, enjoy baseball games, and am full of pep and good humor. I promise to answer all letters received, and will tell you many fascinating things about the Islands. Come on, Pen Pals, and try me.

TONIA OF CAPIZ.

Freda G. will be a real friend.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please print my plea for Pen Pals? I'm a young woman living in Ohio, rather blue and lonely, as I lost my mother and our home has been broken up for about a year. I am working as stenographer, and will be a real friend to any one who cares to write to me. I'm good-natured and of an understanding mind, and promise prompt replies to all letters received.

FREDA G.

Conchita hails from Porto Rico.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a girl nineteen years of age, live in Porto Rico, and want to correspond with girls around my age regardless of where they live. I love music, movies, reading, dancing, and writing long letters. I'm also interested in poetry, and spend part of my time collecting various things of interest. I'll exchange snapshots, and will answer all letters. Girls, please write to me!

CONCHITA.

Girls, you will surely like these Two Ontario Blondes.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Hi, there, Pen Pals everywhere! We are two blond girls of nearly fifteen, like all outdoor sports, skating, baseball, dancing, and many other things. We would love to correspond with girls everywhere, regardless of age. We will gladly exchange snapshots, post cards,

and souvenirs of interest. Girls, won't you please give us a chance to be your Pen Pals?

TWO ONTARIO BLONDES.

This Pal has traveled from coast to coast with musical shows.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here I am in Minneapolis, after living in New York City for fourteen years. Most of my life I have spent dancing in musical shows, and have traveled from coast to coast. How is that for experience? I'm a young man, five feet ten inches tall, and hope to hear from fellows everywhere.

MINNEAPOLIS HAL.

She's interested in the happy things of life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a lively, peppy girl, eighteen years of age, considered attractive, and am a junior at college. I enjoy dancing, and love to have good times. How about you girls writing to me? I'm interested in everything that makes one happy, and guarantee prompt replies. Come on, girls, let's get together!

HOPE VALLEY VINIA.

This young bride wants to hear from every one.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: May I, too, join your Corner? I'm a bride twenty-three years of age, and an enthusiastic collector of stamps and picture post cards. I am hoping that at least one Pen Pal in every State will write to me. It doesn't matter, girls, whether you are single or married. I will answer all letters received.

YOUNG BRIDE.

Exchange souvenirs and post cards with Gretchen.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please print my plea in your Corner. I'm a married woman thirty years of age, have two children, and am greatly interested in crocheting, embroidery, and cooking. I have lots of nice patterns which I would like to exchange, as well as souvenirs and picture post cards. I will make my letters as interesting as I can.

GRETCHEN.

Find out more about these two Pals.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: We are two Canadian girls seventeen years of age, have brown hair, brown eyes, enjoy reading, dancing, and especially receiving letters.

Of course, we also like to write to Pen Pals, and hope girls from far and near will not hesitate to get in touch with us. We will tell you girls more about ourselves in our first letter. Let's go! HELEN AND EDITH.

Grayce E. enjoys life.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please print my plea in your Corner? I'm a young woman twenty-seven years of age, model for photographic illustrations, write short stories, songs, poems, and enjoy life in general. I want to hear from Pen Pals everywhere, and promise prompt and interesting replies to all letters. Who'll be my first Pal?

GRAYCE E.

Share your fun with Weatie.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: This is station L O N E L Y calling! I'm a girl of sixteen, with light hair and hazel eyes. I have lots of time to answer all letters, and hope to hear from girls everywhere. I'm fond of swimming, hiking, skating, dancing, and will exchange souvenirs and snapshots. Girls, please add my name to your Pen Pal list.

WEATIE.

Who'll write to Texas Dolly?

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Have you room for one more lonely girl? I'm twenty-three years of age, enjoy dancing, music, travel, and am greatly interested in aviation. I have been in Canada, Mexico, and now I am living in Texas. I want to hear from every one, regardless of age, and will gladly answer all letters received. Girls, please fill my mail box!

TEXAS DOLLY.

He enjoys everything, from movies to opera.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young fellow twenty years of age, considered good-natured, congenial, and eager to hear from Pals from New York City, although I will answer all letters. I've traveled a lot, enjoy the movies, yachting, the opera, and writing letters. Write to me, boys; I will be glad to tell you more about myself.

HAMPTON ED.

Willie Alice hails from California.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is another sixteen-year-old girl who likes plenty of excitement. Won't some one please answer my plea? I am attending high school in a lively California city, enjoy dancing, movies, and would love to hear from girls

from all over the world. I will answer all letters, so please don't disappoint me, girls.
WILLIE ALICE.

A blue-eyed blonde from Utah.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Who wants to hear from a Pen Pal from Utah? I'm a blue-eyed, blond girl sixteen years of age, go to high school, and just love to write letters. All you girls between fourteen and seventeen years of age can write to me with the assurance that I will answer all letters promptly. I will tell you lots of interesting things about this State, and also more about myself.

UTAH DOT.

She'll answer your letter the day she receives it.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a Jewish girl eighteen years of age, and want to hear from young and old Jewish Pen Pals everywhere. I like to read, enjoy the movies and listening to the radio. Girls, won't you please write to me? I live in Wisconsin, and promise to answer all letters the same day I get them. How about it? I'll be waiting!

WAUSAU PAL.

This Indian-Irish girl enjoys hunting.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Won't you please find room for my plea in your Corner? I'm an Indian-Irish girl living in Florida, enjoy all outdoor sports, hiking, hunting, and am a good shot with the rifle. I can also hit a bull's-eye at seventy-five yards with a bow and arrow. I will answer all letters, and will send a souvenir to the first five Pals who write.

SUNNY BILLIE.

Boys, here's a friendly Pal you'll all like.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here I am asking for Pen Pals. I'm a young fellow nineteen years of age, live in Pennsylvania, enjoy the finer things of life, especially music, art, literature, poetry, and drama. I also like dancing, sports, and parties. I want to hear from Pals everywhere, particularly those who have a sense of humor.

ADRIAN.

This married Pal has lots of spare time.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young married woman twenty-two years of age, have no children, and loads of free time to an-

swer all letters. I enjoy dancing, visiting with friends, and think it would be simply wonderful to correspond with single and married, everywhere. How about it, girls; will you give me a chance to be your friend?

HOLLIS MRS.

She's danced her way around the world.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I am a French-Syrian girl nearly eighteen years of age, a singer and dancer, can play the banjo, and have traveled in Europe, Asia, and nearly every State in the Union. At present I am living in New Jersey, and hope that Pen Pals everywhere will write because I am very lonesome. I will exchange snapshots with any one.

EVON.

She goes in for anything that spells fun.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Here is another sixteen-year-old girl hoping to find a few sincere Pen Pals. I'm a senior at high school, considered peppy and lively, have a sense of humor, enjoy sports, and go in for anything that spells fun. I will exchange snapshots and souvenirs, and promise prompt and interesting replies to all letters.

BESSIE OF MONTREAL.

Married Pals, answer this plea!

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Do you think some of the Pen Pals who read your Corner would write to a married woman of thirty-three? I am the mother of three boys, have a good husband, enjoy listening to the radio, can play the piano by ear, like to read, drive a car, and write long letters. Come on, Pals, whether young or old, and write to me.

TUBBS.

She has plenty of time to answer all letters.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Is there room in your Corner for another lonely girl? I am twenty-two years of age, live in Ohio, am fond of ball games, swimming, dancing, movies, skating, and almost anything that is lots of fun. Due to a recent illness I am

not working, and have plenty of time to answer all letters. I will exchange snapshots, and promise speedy and interesting replies.

ELMWOOD EM.

Fourteen-year-olds, write to Sincere Dottie.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I want to make other girls happy by being a true friend to every one who writes to me. I'm a girl fourteen years of age, live in New York State, like all sports, reading, movies, and writing long letters. How about it, girls? I would appreciate it if you would drop me a line as a token of your interest.

SINCERE DOTTIE.

She likes to design dresses.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: Please help me to find some Pen Pals. I'm a girl of sixteen, enjoy dancing, traveling, singing, drawing, and designing dresses. I also collect songs, pictures of screen stars, and stamps. I would love to hear from girls all over the country, and promise to answer all letters. I can tell you girls some interesting things about the West, and will be a true friend.

NEBRASKA EDIE.

Georgia Dick works in a department store.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I'm a young chap nineteen years of age, like to meet people and make friends, and at present I am working for my uncle who owns a large department store. Come on, boys, and drop me a line. I like all sports, will exchange snapshots and answer all letters promptly.

GEORGIA DICK.

Cleveland Lu collects stamps and dolls.

DEAR MISS MORRIS: I want to hear from Pen Pals everywhere. I'm a girl nineteen years of age, and will do my best to make my letters interesting. I like reading, all kinds of sports, dancing, and my pet hobby is collecting stamps and dolls. Your age doesn't matter, girls; just get busy and write. I'm sure we can be friends.

CLEVELAND LU.



THE FRIEND IN NEED

Department Conducted by

Laura Alston Brown

Well-known Authority on Love and Marriage

Mrs. Brown will be glad to solve in these pages problems on which you desire advice. Your letters will be regarded confidentially and signatures will be withheld.

Although Mrs. Brown receives more letters than she can possibly print in the department, she answers all the others by mail. So, lay your problem before her with the knowledge that it will have her full attention.

Address Mrs. Laura Alston Brown, Street & Smith's Love Story Magazine, 79 Seventh Avenue, New York, N. Y.

IT seems a pity that parents cannot be made to realize how important it is that boys and girls have the proper home life while in their teens. Many of the terrible crimes and unhappy marriages would be avoided if boys and girls could lead a normal life while in their youth. The following letter shows only too plainly the result of no home life and lack of interest on the part of the parent.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I wrote to you three years ago, and followed your advice. It helped me a great deal, so here I am again with another problem.

My mother died when I was sixteen, and as there were six other children younger than I, she asked me to take care of them as best I could. I managed to graduate from high school, but had to give up my hopes of going to college.

My father was strict and stingy, and I could never have any friends. Sometimes I used to sneak out to meet boys I knew. When my father found out that I was dating boys against his wishes he was very mean. I planned to run away from home, but couldn't bring myself to break the promise I had made my mother to look after the younger children.

That was the time I wrote to you, and you advised me to wait until I was older. A short time after I received your letter my father married again. My stepmother had been a scrubwoman before, but the moment she came into the house she started lording it over all of us.

She told me that I would have to keep on taking care of everything because she intended to enjoy life. When I couldn't stand it any longer I left home.

I found work, but later came home again. Whenever I bought anything for myself, my father said that I ought to give the money at home. I was not making much, but he said that I would have to pay more than six dollars a week for my room and board.

After that I stopped eating at home, and only came in at night to sleep. I had to be in by ten o'clock. If I was a few minutes late they locked me out. My sister used to sneak down to let me in, but my father and stepmother said that if my sister did that again, she would have to get out.

In order not to cause my sister any trouble, I left home altogether and went to another city. I stayed with a girl friend during the winter months. I met her boy friend's brother, and we four used to go out together. I was eighteen, and he twenty-seven. I liked him. Later I found out that he was married and had a child, although he and his wife separated a year before I met him.

I stopped seeing him, and tried to find a job in another part of the city so I wouldn't see him, but after three months I met him again. I was almost down and out financially. I couldn't go back to my girl friend, so he offered to let me stay in his home. He was supporting his father and an aunt, and his brother also lived with them.

Whenever I needed anything he always gave me money, but there was never anything more between us. Finally I found a job. I offered to pay back the money he lent me, but he wouldn't take it.

One night he became very serious. He said he cared enough for me to ask me to be his wife, but as he was already married, the best thing would be for us not to see each other often.

So I started going out with other fellows. I am attractive, dress nicely, and make friends easily. I also like to have good times. I had other boy friends, and sometimes when he called me up I was too busy to see him.

I realized that I loved him, but about that time I met a young man who had often seen me in my home town. He told me that his family had been friendly with mine when I was small. He fell in love with me, and I was attracted because he was so attentive to me.

When I was going home once to see my brothers and sisters, he asked me to stop in to see his folks. His mother and father seemed to like me a lot. He paid my fare on the way back, so I had that much more money to give my sisters. He knew that I was giving them every cent I could spare.

Shortly after that he proposed, and even offered to take care of my brothers and sisters. That dazzled me, I guess. And although I still cared for the other man, I said I would marry him. We thought we would marry at the end of six months.

I made up my mind never to see the first man again, but it so happened that he called me up the very next day. He told me that his wife had divorced him in another State, and that he wanted me to marry him right away.

The next day the second fellow came to see me and he at once saw that something was the matter. When I told him, he said that he wouldn't let me marry any one else, and insisted on taking me down to the city hall to get a license. The clerk wouldn't marry us right away, so we went to a minister.

When my folks found out about my marriage there was quite a storm. They

wanted to have the marriage annulled, and now I'm sorry that I didn't let them. I have been married less than a year, and I don't care for my husband.

My relatives say my husband has been married before and has also been in jail. Even his mother admits her son is worthless, but she wants me to stick to him because he loves me. But he certainly has a funny way of showing his affection. One minute he kisses me and the next minute he gives me a beating. And after that he goes down on his knees and apologizes, saying he didn't mean it.

At first I intended to make the best of it, but now I can't stand things as they are. I hate to admit to my folks that they were right about him, and that I was wrong. I am nineteen, and feel like forty.

I have talked this over with my mother-in-law and she tells me to try and put up with things and that some day he will change. But I don't think he ever will.

I'm a nervous wreck, and cry all the time. I have tried to reason with him, but he refuses to listen to me. I still love the first man, and I'm sorry that I didn't marry him.

DISCOURAGED.

It is indeed a pity that your marriage is not working out better, dear. However, try to realize that crying over spilled milk will not make the situation more hopeful.

I agree with you that your husband's manner of expressing his affection for you is rather bewildering. But surely it is not necessary for you to put up with beatings? In this respect you certainly ought to insist on an immediate change on his part, and if he does not seem to take you seriously, you should assert yourself. No one will stand up for you, my dear, if you don't stand up for yourself.

Make it clear to your husband that he must treat you with the respect and thoughtfulness a husband owes his wife.

See to it also that you have some recreation; visit some of your friends, and have them come to visit you. Avoid being too docile. Your husband should learn that you do

not intend to be a "doormat" wife, and that if he expects you to care for him, he must do his share to make you happy.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl of eighteen, popular with boys, and in love with a boy who is of a different nationality. He lives in a town forty miles away.

He is not good-looking, but we enjoy the same things, and have a good time when we go out together. People talk about me because I am going with him. They say that the difference in our nationalities will prevent us from being happy.

But other boys I know never get serious. They never talk about marriage. They like to take girls out, and although they want to pet sometimes, they don't mention love.

I'm inclined to be rather serious-minded, and would like to get married and settle down, and this boy talks about getting married as soon as he can afford to make a home for me. My folks make things rather hard for us, because they don't like him.

What shall I do? I think that I am in love with him, and I am sure that he cares for me.

CALIFORNIA RIA.

As a general rule, Ria, young people of the same nationality have a better chance to be happy together. Of course, there is always the exception to the rule. But you are still young enough to be able to wait a little while before you actually decide to marry.

However, don't make the mistake, dear, of rushing into marriage with the first boy who mentions love. In your eagerness to settle down, you may be mistaking your friendship with this boy for love.

Why not give yourself a year in which to make sure that you and this boy are really in love? If you care for each other, you will lose nothing by waiting. In the meantime, make it a point not to shut other friendships out of your life.

And try not to resent your parents' attitude. I am sure they want you to be happy, and are anxious to have you marry the right man.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: We are two girls who have been the best of friends for five years. We are eighteen and seventeen years of age, and for three years have been going out with two boys, Roy and Nick.

The trouble is that we now find ourselves in love with Nick. We are such close friends that we wouldn't think of hurting each other. One of us would really try to forget Nick if we knew which one he cares for.

Nick doesn't go out with other girls, and he seems to show no partiality toward either of us. We have tried dating other boys, but don't enjoy ourselves when we are out with them.

We would greatly appreciate it if you would advise us what we can do to make Nick show which one of us he cares for. We have tried to talk this over many times, but cannot find an answer.

BABS AND MARIE.

Love has always been a puzzle, and like a bird in the air we can rarely guess on which tree it will rest. If neither you nor your friend can tell which of you Nick likes best, and since you cannot ask him outright, keep on being good friends. Although Nick may be fond of you both, it is very possible that he is not in love with either, and regards you only as good pals.

A young man in love cannot altogether conceal his affection, and there are many ways of expressing love without making an open-and-shut case of it.

Under the circumstances, you and your friend are to be admired for remaining good friends. Love can be compared to a game of chance; until the last minute we cannot tell who will be the winner. Friendship is very precious, and if Nick should later on choose one or the other, I hope you will go on being friends.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl nineteen years of age, and have been going steady with Fred for about two years. Lately I have begun to think that I do not care for him any more.

All during the time I have been going with him he has never treated me as a boy

should treat a girl friend. On Saturday nights he never wanted to have dates with me because he said those were his nights off. But I have heard that he went out with other girls on Saturday nights.

I have always given him spending money to pay our way, because he bought a car and has been broke almost all the time. In the two years we have been going together I must have given him almost a hundred dollars. You know how small amounts add up. But he never seems to appreciate anything.

He is always accusing me of going out with other fellows, and is very jealous if I dance with the same fellow twice. He never believes anything I tell him.

Last summer he left home because he had a quarrel with his father, and went to live at a hotel. For three months I paid his room rent until he found a job, but he didn't appreciate that. Do you think that I ought to forget him?

Recently I have noticed a young man who appeals to me very much. How can I get acquainted with him? I have often felt as though I wanted to speak to him, but something has held me back. Do you think that because I like this boy, I no longer feel interested in Fred?

Please give me your opinion of my problem. There is no one I can talk things over with, and I'm sure your advice will help me.

VELIE.

Judging from the way Fred has taken advantage of your patience, good nature, and your willingness to help him out financially, it is not unlikely that his attitude has turned you against him, and that you can't feel as interested in him now as you once did. You will avoid prolonging an uncomfortable situation, dear, if you try to concentrate on other friendships.

Make up your mind to definitely forget Fred and go out with other young men. If after all this time Fred has shown so little consideration for you, he doesn't deserve your friendship. A man with backbone would not lower his pride to the extent of making a practice of borrowing money from his girl friend.

As for the second boy who has captivated your interest, I'm afraid

there is no way you can maneuver an introduction unless a mutual friend comes to your rescue. Unconventional meetings may appear to be exciting but they are rarely advisable.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: My parents separated when I was nine years old. At thirteen I met a boy three years older than I. We liked each other a lot, but my mother was strict and wouldn't let me bring him to the house, nor would she let me go anywhere because she was afraid that I would meet him.

When I was fourteen I began meeting him secretly. But after a while my mother found it out and sent me to my aunt. When I came back I saw this boy again, and after thinking it over mother allowed him to come to the house.

At fifteen I started to keep steady company with him. We were very happy together, and even talked about marriage. One day he said he couldn't come to see me that evening because he had to work. My mother and I went to a school dance, and who should walk in but my boy friend with another girl!

Later he cut in as I was dancing with another boy. I asked him how he came to escort another girl, and he said that he had finished his work earlier than he expected. He insisted that he didn't bring this girl to the dance. He said they met outside.

For two months I tried to forget him, and went out with other boys. I knew he dated other girls. Whenever we happened to meet I always acted coldly. I could see this hurt him. Then I realized that I couldn't forget him, or enjoy myself without him.

I began to be more friendly, but he changed and this time he acted coldly. I didn't know what to do. I went out several times with his best boy friend, but this must have caused them to quarrel, because later on his friend was nice to me, but didn't ask me to go out with him.

Recently I was walking home and he came along in his car. He offered to take me home. But instead of going straight to my house he drove out farther along the road and wanted to talk things over with me.

He told me that he couldn't go on pretending he didn't care for me when he still cared very much. Of course, I admitted that I still cared for him, too. However, he said he couldn't come to see me often

because he didn't have the money to take me places. This makes me think that he doesn't love me as he says. What do you think? He asked me not to have other dates. He said if I date other boys it will show that I don't love him as much as I say I do.

ANXIOUS BLUE EYES.

It seems to me, my dear, that your boy friend's viewpoint is rather selfish. As long as you two are not engaged, it would not be unreasonable for you both to go out with other friends. Surely he cannot be serious in asking you to stay home all the time and go out only when he can take you? That would not be fair to you.

Whether or not he loves you as much as he wants you to believe, is not easy to say. When a young man is truly in love with a girl, he is usually anxious to spend all his free time with her, regardless of whether he can afford to take her places or not.

On the other hand, Blue Eyes, when a girl does as the boy wishes, stays home every night except on the evenings when he decides to take her out, and he takes her interest and affection for granted, there is danger that his attentions may wander.

It is to a girl's advantage to keep the boy friend guessing just enough to make him feel somewhat apprehensive, by letting him see that she can enjoy herself also with other young men.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I have no mother, and there is no one with whom I could talk over my problem. I'm a girl twenty-one years of age, and would be very glad to have your advice.

Two years ago I fell in love with a young man, and for about a year and a half we went out together quite a bit. He never made love to me. We were good friends, and he was very good to me.

Last fall we had a quarrel, and I didn't see him for three months. During that time I went to parties and dances with an-

other fellow and had an all-around good time. Last January the first young man found an excuse to come to see me. We became friendly again, and shortly after that we became engaged.

We saw each other three and four times a week. Then his brother died and left him some money. He had a job with a promising future, but since he inherited this money he has become indifferent to his work, dropped practically all his old friends, and he never comes to my home or wants to take me out. He tells his friends that he still loves me. But do you think he does?

I cannot understand why he dropped me like this. All his friends and relatives liked me a lot, and I also liked them. Whenever we meet outside now he seems to find it hard to look at me.

I am so unhappy and puzzled. I don't even know whether I should consider myself still engaged to him. Do you think it would be better if I went out with other boys? I hate staying home all the time when my friends are going places. My best girl friend tells me that this boy never loved me or he wouldn't act this way.

MURIEL.

In this instance, dear, I am inclined to agree with your friend. Your boy friend would hardly give you up if he loved you. Isn't it strange how a little financial independence can sometimes influence a man to become indifferent not only to his old friends, but also to his obligations?

However, try not to break your heart over him, Muriel. Bad news is never welcome, but it is probably just as well that you have found out how he feels about you. The fact that he tells his friends he still cares for you proves little, if anything. If he were to come to you and tell you so himself, it would amount to something.

Now cheer up, dear. If your friend makes no further attempt to see you, put him out of your heart and mind and look for a more dependable young man who will really appreciate you.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am in love with a boy with whom I have been going since I was fourteen. I am now seventeen. He isn't working, and it looks as though he never will find a job; he doesn't like work. The trouble is that I expect to become a mother in about five months, and I am afraid to tell my parents.

I haven't any friends with whom I could stay, but my boy friend wants me to marry him now without telling any one. He said he would get a job and we could live in furnished rooms until we can have a home of our own. He drinks now and then, although I don't think it's a habit.

But I'm so worried about everything that I can't eat or sleep, and seem to be going around in circles. I'm afraid that if I go to my parents with my story, they will tell me to leave home and won't want to have anything to do with me.

My boy friend is twenty years old, and not very strong. I am sometimes afraid that he will not be able to work and support a wife and child. Isn't there some other way out of this tangle? I don't know whether I should marry him or not. My people know that I go out with him, but they do not have a good opinion of a fellow who does not seem anxious to work hard and get somewhere.

I think if I marry him they would never want to see me again because they have picked out a man I don't like and expect me to marry him some day when I am older. Please give me your advice.

UNHAPPY.

I am afraid there is only one solution to your problem, my child, and that is to marry your friend as soon as you can possibly arrange it. You have not only yourself to think of, but also your baby.

Worrying about the future will not help the situation. The advisable thing to do would be to announce your engagement at once, and make plans for an immediate marriage. Perhaps when your parents see that you are happy, they may even help you two to get started. And if you marry now, there is no great need to tell them just yet that you are an expectant mother. You might tell them the news shortly after you have a

"Mrs." tacked onto your name. Once they know, they will no doubt get used to the fact that you have not married the boy they picked out for you.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am married and have a baby girl nearly one year old. I'm seventeen, and my husband is twenty. We have been married almost two years. Here is my problem.

Before I married I was very unhappy at home. I never went anywhere, never had any friends, was not allowed to go out, and had to work very hard. Not that I didn't want to work, but a young girl longs to have a little fun in life.

When I met the man who is now my husband we liked each other from the first. We went together for about five months. Then I didn't see him for several months, but we had an understanding that as soon as he could afford to provide a home for me we would be married. My folks did not like him and said they would not let me marry him, so when he was ready he came for me and we ran away and got married.

We were very happy during the first few months, although we had hardly anything to start on. After a while I found out that I was going to have a baby, and my husband was very happy about it. He found a better job, and for a while we went places and had lots of fun.

I'm not beautiful, but I'm not hard to look at. I also like a good time once in a while, and am considered jolly and good-natured. A few months before our baby was born my husband started running around with a girl who lived in our town. He took her to dances and shows, and to top it off he also started to drink.

This girl used to be a friend of ours at one time. I was heartbroken, but I thought that after the baby came my husband would change. But I was wrong. He was even worse than before. Every one saw how badly he behaved and that he left me all alone while he enjoyed himself.

So to get even I started going out, too. I knew he wouldn't like that, but I thought it might bring him to his senses. As soon as he saw me go out he became very attentive to me, but had the nerve to say that I ought to be ashamed of myself—after all he had done!

Ever since then he has been very nice to me, but now that I have him back, I don't think I want him. I'm not even sure if I

love him, and wish I could go home to my folks. I have thought of getting a divorce, but I don't want to do anything I'd be sorry for on account of the baby.

Do you think I ought to stay with my husband feeling as I do about him? I often think I would be much happier if we separated.

LYNN.

My dear, you can make your marriage a regrettably dreary affair, or you can try to weed out complications and build it into a worth-while relationship of which you can be proud. Of course, I am not suggesting that everything is up to you; a great deal also depends on your husband. But now that you have him back, it should not be quite so difficult to get things started on the road to a real happiness.

No doubt the indifference you feel toward your husband is only natural after the way he has treated you. But instead of thinking seriously of divorce, you might take your child's welfare into consideration and have another try. I mean, really build your marriage into a partnership that will be a credit to you and your husband. Why not give him another chance?

And try to make time for some play. Have friends come and visit you, and return their visits. Arrange to have some one stay with the baby once in a while while you and your husband go to a dance, or a show and late bite at some inexpensive restaurant. Try it; and I hope everything will work out well for you.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: May I tell Unhappy Bobbie my story? I'm sure it will help her.

My experience, Bobbie, was similar to yours, but I have at last found happiness; such happiness as I never dreamed existed. When I was fifteen I fell in love with a boy six years my senior. He was of a different religion and nationality, but my folks thought I was too young to be really serious, and allowed us to be friendly.

However, after I graduated from school my mother wanted me to break with him. I loved him so much I would have rather died. I loved him more than my honor, but our baby died prematurely. It was impossible for us to get married at the time because we would have had to live with his mother, and he always did everything she wanted him to.

Although he claimed that he loved me as he could never love another girl, his mother always came first. When my mother found out about the baby she made me break with him and refused to let him come to the house to see me.

Of course, although I was heartbroken, I would sneak out and meet him outside. He always told me that as soon as he had a better job we would get married.

However, he must have thought that the job would come to him, because he made no effort to find a better job, and the one he had didn't pay him enough to support himself. So I started going out with other boys, and a few months ago I met a really nice boy.

He makes my smallest wish seem important; whatever I want is all right with him, and the best is not good enough for me. When he asked me to marry him, I told him about this other boy, but nothing seemed to matter. We are going to be married two weeks from to-day. He has a fine job, some money in the bank, and I believe that he will do all he can to make me happy.

I am sure that if I had not broken up with the first boy I would have missed all this happiness. I know that you, too, Bobbie, will find real love if you only give yourself a chance to forget the boy who is not worthy of your affection. He doesn't love you, and if you forget him, you will be much happier later on. You'll have nothing but heartaches if you keep on as you are.

DIANA.

No truer words have been spoken than that it is never too late to make a fresh start on the road to happiness, and that wrong can never be right. Free love may appear to be composed of enticing thrills and the glitter that we sometimes mistake for joy, but in the end disappointment and heartache are added to disillusionment.

I am sure that Bobbie would do well to take your advice, Diana, and

try to forget a boy who has proved himself so unworthy of her love. A girl should never pin all her hopes on a man who is so egotistic and selfish that he always thinks of himself first.

I am also very glad, dear, that you will soon be married to a boy who loves you so sincerely and deeply that he can shut his eyes to the past and feel concerned only about the future which, I'm sure, you will both be very proud of. The best of luck to you, Diana!

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I am a girl of seventeen, considered attractive, and friends tell me that I have a very pleasing personality. I have been going with boys ever since my mother died four years ago. Some people say that I am more mature than many girls of my age. Anyway, my father trusts me to use my own judgment in the matter of going out with boys, and my home life is quite happy.

Three years ago my father employed a salesman for his business. Bill and I became good friends, although I knew from the first that he was engaged to another girl.

Last Christmas, however, Bill took me to his home to meet his people, and I became acquainted with his brother who is four years my senior. Roger asked me to go skating with him, and we had a nice time, but I found out that he had a steady girl friend. I liked Roger a lot, but I was afraid that I might fall in love with him so I didn't go out with him again.

Two months ago Bill told me that Roger was ill, and asked me to go to see him. I went every night for two weeks. He was still going with this other girl, but she didn't seem worried about him. Roger's sister told me that she didn't like his girl friend, and wished I would take him away from her because this girl was going with Roger only for the good times he could show her.

I know she wasn't true to him because I saw her out with other boys while Roger was sick. I didn't think she loved him. So when Roger was better we started going around together. He told me that he loved me and would start saving so we could get married.

This other girl heard about our plans and started making things unpleasant. Last

week she deliberately came to Roger's house and told him she wanted to go out with him. I was there at the time; I said nothing, but Roger didn't want to quarrel with her right then and there, so they went out.

I decided that if he preferred her to me, he could have her. To all appearances I am not annoyed by his actions, but I am heartbroken. I haven't been out with him since then. I could go away for a while and stay with a relative if I want to. Do you think I should, and leave Roger to this other girl? I am not sure now whether or not he loves me. Sometimes I wish I had never met him.

UNCERTAIN SEVENTEEN.

I sympathize with you, my child, but I am afraid that you are taking this whole matter too seriously. You see, dear, when a boy is really in love he would avoid doing anything that might hurt the girl who holds his heart. It seems only logical to suppose that if Roger went so far as to discuss marriage with you, he would have in some way reached an understanding with this other girl.

Although Roger may have made an impression on the romantic side of your nature, you really didn't have enough time to make sure that he is the only man you could be happy with.

If you have a chance to go away for a while, why not do so? A change of surroundings, new friends, and a chance to think things over in a different atmosphere would surely do you a great deal of good. You might even meet a boy whom you will like better than Roger. Sometimes a crush is mistaken for love, but when real love comes along the difference is very apparent.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I wonder if other young wives find marriage as trying as I do. When I was fifteen I met a home guard, and the fact that he wore a uniform and was attentive to me when he could have dated other girls thrilled me. We saw each other for about four months, and then he

begged me to go steady with him. A year later we were married.

I didn't really want to get married, but he begged so hard, and my life at home was not very happy, that finally I agreed to become his wife. I used to tell my friends that I didn't love him, but they all said that I was too young to know my own mind, and that I would learn to care for him after we were married.

A year later my baby was born. My husband has been very good to me, but I think the hatchet fell, so to say, when I went to the hospital. My husband didn't want me to go, but the doctor said it was necessary if the baby and I were to live.

My folks said I should go, and his folks wanted to call another doctor, but finally I went to the hospital and stayed there for nearly a month. When the baby was five months old I went home to my folks, but came back a couple of weeks later when I found out that I was going to be a mother again. However, I was ill that summer, and the baby died.

Now I'm glad that I have only one child. My husband has struck me several times, and we have lived like two strangers for the past four months. He sometimes tells me to pack up and leave, but when I went to see a lawyer he advised me not to.

My husband often says that he is going to make things so miserable for me that I'll be glad to go, and he has almost succeeded. Friends tell me to stick it out, but it's getting so hard that I can hardly put up with him. He drinks and gambles, and when he comes home I have to take care of him as if he were a baby.

I can't get along with my in-laws. They have even said that they don't think my husband is my baby's father, although the baby is the picture of him. However, they seem to be crazy enough about the child.

I wish you would give me some advice. I'm so miserable, and if I leave my husband tells me that he will go to court and get the baby away from me. My friends say he can't do that, but he might get some one to say things about me.

He insults my friends when they come to see me, and whenever we are out together he talks to me as if I were a criminal. If he would only treat me right I'm sure I could get along with him, but when he acts mean I hate him.

I told him before we were married that I didn't love him, but he said I would learn to care for him. I'm so worried I'm constantly losing weight. I have heard that he goes out with other women. Should I go out with other men?

I wish I knew what to do. I am now eighteen, and my husband is twenty-five. Please tell me what to do. I feel as if I can't go on like this much longer.

ANNETTE.

My dear, giving the other person a dose of his own medicine may sometimes settle a problem, but it is not always advisable because we cannot be sure whether it is the right cure. If you have no actual proof that your husband is going out with other women, try not to let gossip you hear upset you. You would gain nothing by going out with other men, and it would only complicate matters to a greater degree.

It is something of a mystery why some husbands act as they do, and remain blind to the fact that they would be much happier themselves if they contributed their bit to making marriage a joyful relationship. How can a man expect anything but discord in his home if he deliberately makes his wife unhappy? Marriage is not a one-man job.

But before you actually decide that divorce is the best way out of your unhappiness, Annette, I would suggest that you give yourself a little more time. Meanwhile, it might help if you could reach some sort of understanding with your husband.

As long as you remain convinced that you two could get along all right if he only treated you better, try to find out what is the matter; why he acts as he does. Talk things over in as friendly a manner as possible, but make it clear to him that you intend to stand up for your rights.

Sometimes very strange reasons come to light when matters are thrashed out. And sometimes it is only some little thing that can easily be righted without the tragedy of divorce. See what you can do.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: I always enjoy reading your department. The reason I am writing now is because I want to say a few words to the boys who consider themselves "too good" for the girls of to-day, and are always talking against the modern girl.

I am considered good-looking, and for two years I tried to be what the boys call a modern girl. That is, I smoked, drank, and had a date for every night in the week until the small hours of the morning.

I never lacked boy friends or dates, and went out with a different boy every night. I'm a good dancer, and the boys appeared to enjoy taking me around. I didn't smoke and drink because I liked to, but because I had the idea that a girl who wanted to be popular had to do these things.

A year ago I met the man who is now my husband. He didn't approve of girls drinking and smoking, and helped me to get out of the habit of doing both. Girls can be popular even if they omit these two social "pastimes." He didn't dance, so whenever we had a date he took me to places where he could enjoy himself, and I liked them because I always had a good time.

My friend was jealous, so I tried not to hurt him. We went together for almost nine months, and then we were married. At that time I was still in high school, but I didn't drop out. I graduated last June. I am only eighteen now, have been married five months, and we are very happy.

My story goes to show that a girl can find a good husband without getting drunk or smoking too much in order to please the boys who date her. And if boys really want their girl friends to pet, smoke, drink, and stay out until all hours in the morning, girls could be happy without doing these things. I think that in most cases boys are to blame if girls go in for a lot of foolish notions. Eve.

Without acting like a flock of prudes, I am sure most of us will agree with Eve that girls who shun excessive drinking, and are wise enough to keep out of the clutches of gossip, certainly deserve praise. A whole evening's enjoyment can be had for the asking, without pairing off into cozy dark corners, or parking on side roads.

My best wishes for your happiness, Eve.

DEAR MRS. BROWN: There is no one else I can turn to, so won't you please try to help me? I am twenty-one. Two years ago I married a man twice my age.

My husband was crazy about me, and we got along wonderfully well. He didn't even want me to do housework, although he let me help him in his business. His mother loves me, and I think the world of her. I have no trouble with my in-laws.

However, my husband died suddenly two months ago without leaving a will. He never thought that his life would be cut short in that way. He and his mother owned the business half and half. He also had some other property in town.

I am still living with my mother-in-law, and help her with the business as I did before. What I want to know is whether or not I am entitled to any share of the business. I never discuss it with my in-laws. My brother-in-law is the manager, and they never offer to give me money. I get my room and board and, so far, I have had no need to ask them for anything.

However, I don't know how I stand, and as this is a small town, every one would know if I went to the one lawyer we have. What shall I do about it? I don't always want to go on helping them like this without knowing how I stand. S.

You have my sympathy, my dear; it is heartbreaking when some one we love leaves us so suddenly. But the best we can do is to be brave and face the future with courage.

But to return to your question. It is common knowledge, I believe, that when a husband dies without leaving a will the bulk of his property goes to the wife. In other words, you are now a partner in the business with your mother-in-law.

I am sorry I cannot advise you on legal details, but I would urge you to see a lawyer; that is, if your mother-in-law and the son who is now manager make no move whatever to offer you some financial return. They might have considered it a little too early to discuss this matter. But if in the near future nothing is mentioned, don't feel backward in bringing up the subject, and act accordingly.

Biggest
10¢ WORTH
Ever offered in the
AVIATION FIELD



**FICTION
& FACT**

**MODEL
DEPARTMENT**

**CLYDE
PANGBORN**
Consulting Editor

Air Adventurers
CLUB

NEWS PHOTOS

Street & Smith's
10¢ BILL BARNES 10¢
AIR TRAILS

"Success"



Carling's
AMBER ALE
Black Label
LAGER **BEER**

MADE FROM CANADA'S FINEST BARLEY AND CHOICE HOPS

Tucketts make it Easier!

**ANY 52 "CARD VALUES"
MAKE A SET OF
TUCKETT
PREMIUM CARDS**

To make a set it takes only 26 red cards, each of two-card value, as packed in the large packages of Buckingham Cigarettes.

Tuckett Premium Cards are packed in the following famous brands

**BUCKINGHAM CIGARETTES
BUCKINGHAM FINE CUT TOBACCO
BUCKINGHAM PIPE TOBACCO
PHILIP MORRIS NAVY CUT
Cigarettes**

Also

Virginia Oval Cigarettes
Herbert Tareyton Cigarettes
Crescent Fine Cut

Melachrino Cigarettes
Marlboro Cigarettes
Orinoco Cut Fine

Throat easy!



Buckingham

...SAVE THE PREMIUM CARDS

SCAN COURTESY OF EXCITER

